DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 350 CE 085 562

TITLE	Improving Adult Education for the 21st Century. Hearing Before the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives, One Hundred Eighth Congress, First Session. Hearing held in Washington, DC, March 4, 2003.
INSTITUTION	Congress of the U.S., Washington, DC. House Committee on Education and the Workforce.
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	89p.; Serial No. 108-4.
AVAILABLE FROM	U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office, Washington, DC 20402. For full text: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/ cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108_house_hearings&docid=f:86682.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090) -- Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Academic Standards; Access to Education; Adult Basic Education; *Adult Education; Adult Literacy; Competition; *Educational Improvement; Educational Strategies; Educational Trends; *Family Literacy; Federal Aid; *Federal Legislation; *Federal Programs; Financial Support; Futures (of Society); Hearings; Labor Force Development; Outcome Based Education; Student Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	Congress 108th

ABSTRACT

A hearing was held to discuss the prior four years of implementation of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and to recommend further improvements. The opening statements of Chairman Howard McKeon and Dale E. Kildee introduce the meeting and discuss the importance of promoting an educated populace that will maintain the United States' place in the global economy. Next, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education Carol D'Amico suggests that the current federal program for adult literacy is inadequate and recommends focusing on the following criteria to improve it: (1) the instructional component of adult basic and literacy education is essential; (2) academic achievement will be more easily obtained with rigorous content standards and student assessments; (3) funding needs to be focused on what works to encourage adoption of promising instructional strategies; (4) more access and choice should be provided to adult education students; and (5) flexibility is key to literacy education. Next, statements by a director of a non-profit affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a director of human resources, a community college associate vice president of academic and student services, and an adult education participant discuss their experiences with adult literacy. Most of the statements are followed by transcriptions of discussion with the subcommittee. Appendices include written statements of all of the presenters. (MO)

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IMPROVING ADULT EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETITIVENESS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, MARCH 4, 2003

Serial No. 108-4

Printed for the use of the Committee on Education and the Workforce

86-682 pdf

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
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IMPROVING ADULT EDUCATION

FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2003

SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETETIVENESS

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:00 p.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives McKeon, Isakson, Ehlers, Keller, Porter, Gingrey, Kildee, Tierney, Wu, Holt, Van Hollen, Ryan, Payne, and Hinojosa.

Staff present: Kevin Frank, Professional Staff Member; Alexa Marrero, Press Secretary; Whitney Rhoades, Professional Staff Member; Deborah L. Samantar, Committee Clerk/Intern Coordinator; Bob Sweet, Professional Staff Member; Liz Wheel, Legislative Assistant; Alex Nock, Minority Legislative Associate; and Joe Novotny, Minority Clerk/Staff Assistant.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN HOWARD "BUCK" MCKEON, SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETETIVENESS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Chairman McKeon. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness will come to order.

We are meeting today to hear testimony on improving adult education for the 21st century. Under committee rule 12(b), opening statements are limited to the chairman and the ranking minority member of the subcommittee. Therefore, if other members have statements, they may be included in the hearing record.

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With that, I ask unanimous consent for the hearing record to remain open 14 days to allow members' statements and other extraneous materials during the hearing to be submitted in the official hearing record. Without objection, so ordered.

Good afternoon. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate your willingness to testify before this subcommittee and I would also like to thank those of you who are here to hear these witnesses.

We are looking forward to your comments and the recommendations you will provide to improve the adult education system in the United States.

In 1998, the Workforce Investment Act was passed, which included Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. States have been working hard to implement this law for four years, and now here we are again, ready to make further improvements.

As we begin the 21st century, the need for an educated populous is critical to our success in maintaining our place in the global economy, and providing opportunities for all of our citizens to reach their highest potential.

But the truth is, there is an increasing number of adults who have not mastered the basic skills, like the ability to read with fluency, write with clarity, and do simple computational math. Some of this is due to the fact that new immigrants currently amount to almost half of our net population growth, and labor force expansion.

It is estimated that by the year 2020, the nation will lose 43 million people who have some level of college experience from the workforce, and they need to be replaced.

In the No Child Left Behind Act, we have addressed many of these issues, by making sure that schools are held accountable for improving academic skills of students, tripling the funds for reading instruction, and expanding opportunities for school systems to help students in poor school districts improve their basic skills.

That is the first line of defense for making sure all citizens know at least the basic skills. But there are many individuals who have been left behind already. That population includes adults who have dropped out of school, been passed on through the grades without ever mastering the basics, or an increasing number of adults who have immigrated to the United States and do not have English as their first language.

Certainly the federal adult education program cannot solve all the problems we have, but we can do our best to target the resources towards the most critical needs of our citizens. I believe this is an issue where there is broad bipartisan support.

Increasing the focus on strengthening skills in basic reading, math, and English acquisition is an important first step for adults who need these skills. They are, after all, the gateway skills to a better job, and to a more secure future.

Adults need more education than a GED or its equivalent. But that takes real commitment, time, and effort. Our efforts to improve the adult education program should make it easier for adults to access quality programs. Thus, improving accountability provisions, improving professional development programs, insisting that research-validated instructional practices are used, and conducting the research necessary to expand our knowledge of what works is essential as we move toward the reauthorization of this Act.

There are major challenges ahead of us. For example, in 2001, ESL enrollment was 42 percent of the total enrollment in state-administered adult education programs. But there were continuing reports of waiting lists for classes in many parts of the nation.

The U.S. Census Bureau data from 1999 show that full-time workers 18 years and older who have not yet completed high school earn an average of $23,447 a year. The average for all workers is $43,396. Those without a high school diploma or its equivalent, on average, earn almost half the salary, or just over half the salary of the average worker.

Employers searching for qualified employees over the past five years have noticed an increasing trend in the numbers of employees lacking the basic skills needed in the workplace.

My wife and I were just out of the country for a few days. When we came back in, we had not heard much English in the couple of days we had been gone. As we re-entered, they said, ``That line down there is for U.S. citizens,'' so we went down, and we said, ``Oh, boy, this is great. Nobody in line was speaking English.''

Chairman McKeon. We must keep these facts in mind as we re-authorize the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Your testimony is vital to that task, and we look forward to hearing from each of you today.

I now yield to Congressman Kildee, ranking member of the committee, for his opening statement.

WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN HOWARD "BUCK" MCKEON, SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETETIVENESS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.—APPENDIX A

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER DALE E. KILDEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETETIVENESS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. Kildee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and my friend. I am pleased to join you at today's hearing on the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

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I especially want to welcome Assistant Secretary D'Amico to the subcommittee today. I know that all the members look forward to your testimony and the testimony of today's other witnesses.

Adult education is a key federal investment in strengthening the literacy and employability of our nation. Very few adults in the United States are completely and truly illiterate. However, there are many, many adults without the literacy skills they need to find and keep decent jobs, support their children's education, and participate actively in life.

According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, over 90 million people lack a sufficient foundation of basic skills to function successfully in our society. These individuals cannot provide for their families and secure their economic future.

As we look to reauthorize the adult education programs, I believe we need to focus on upgrading the quality of our programs. As the need for adult education continues, we must ensure that adult learners have the highest quality staff, and benefit from the best research-based curriculum. We also must ensure that both the Federal Government and states provide increased funding to meet the needs of adult learners.

Our states and localities cannot be expected to provide top-notch adult education programs on a shoe-string budget. In addition, we need to be continually sensitive to the needs in the adult education population.

The fastest growing segment of adult education is English as a Second Language classes. As immigrants continue to come to our country, and seek to become a part of our society, and obtain employment, literacy is a critical goal.

I think this is true all around the country. Only certain states were impacted at first, but there are very few states that are not impacted now by immigrants, and they enrich our society. They have some special needs. We should, as a Federal Government, recognize the needs because immigration is federal policy. We are enriched by these people, but the Federal Government has, I think, a special responsibility.

Lastly, I look forward to hearing about the administration's reauthorization priorities. I would be remiss if I did not express my concern about the Department's proposal to block grant vocational education and eliminate its secondary focus.

However, the initial components of the administration's proposals on adult education seem promising in putting its focus on standards for adult education programs. I look forward to working with the administration, and you, Assistant Secretary D'Amico, as we focus on making our adult education programs more effective.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER DALE E. KILDEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETETIVENESS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.—APPENDIX B

Chairman McKeon. Thank you, Mr. Kildee. I would now like to introduce the witnesses. We have two panels of witnesses today.

Before the Assistant Secretary begins her testimony, I would like to remind the members that we will impose a five-minute limit on all questions.

Dr. D'Amico is the Assistant Secretary for the Office for Vocational and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education. Previously, she was the executive director for workforce, economic, and community development at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Dr. D'Amico has also served as a policy and planning specialist for the Indiana Department of Education, and senior program analyst for the Indiana General Assembly. In addition, she is the co-author of ``Workforce 2020: Work and Workers in the 21st Century,'' which offers recommendations on how to equip the 21st century workforce.

She is a hard worker and knowledgeable. I had the opportunity of having her in my district at CLC, where she held a hearing and met with people. She is working hard to carry our message - her message - to the people and the country.

We are happy to have you here today, and turn the time over now to you.

STATEMENT OF CAROL D'AMICO, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Dr. D'Amico. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify on the administration's ideas for literacy education for our nation's adults.

I have prepared a written statement I would like to enter into the record. I will now review the key points from that statement.

The federal program for adult literacy is an inadequate tool to address the gap between the literacy skills needed by the nation's adults and the current level of literacy in the nation. Tens of millions of adults do not have the reading, language, computational, or English language skills they need to be self-sufficient, and to continue to adapt to the changing demands of the economy.

A growing proportion of participants in our program - 42 percent - are in English acquisition programs with the remaining 58 percent possessing the basic skills below a high school

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equivalent level.

I advocate expanding our vision by thinking creatively about the literacy education program, and in this vision, a quality literacy education program would achieve the following.

Adults will learn the core academic skills they need for current and future education, training, or work opportunities. Adults will complete the high school equivalent level of adult education, possessing the basic reading, language, English language, and computational skills they need to go on to post-secondary education or training, or employment without the need for remediation.

Students will improve their skills quickly when they participate. They will be able to find educational options close by that fit their schedules, and programs will be equipped to meet the special needs of students with disabilities.

Legislation can promote this vision by focusing on several criteria that parallel the principles of No Child Left Behind.

First, the instructional component of adult basic and literacy education is essential. Programs need to improve their quality, both to accelerate student learning, and to obtain results. Students need academic skills. Employers need to see demonstrated results that they value, such as students' attainment of basic skills they will need to increase productivity.

While the law should continue to authorize basic, secondary, family, workplace, and English literacy activities, each of these programs need to focus on student achievement of core academic skills that leads to better employment opportunities.

Second, academic achievement will be more easily obtained with rigorous content standards and student assessments. We propose that the new legislation encourages the adoption of state-level content standards, and standardized assessments in every state in language arts, mathematics, and English fluency, to ensure quality instruction and results.

Just as accountability under No Child Left Behind is dependent on clear academic standards, and assessing students' proficiency against those standards, so are standards and assessments needed to foster accountability in adult literacy education.

For adults, standards should be calibrated against real-world expectations, such as entering post-secondary education, entering the workforce, or English fluency. The standards states established under No Child Left Behind provide another benchmark against which states can calibrate their standards for all adult students.

We will support states in forming voluntary partnerships to develop standards and align student assessments to those standards so that each state does not have to incur the costs of developing them themselves.

We know that in any endeavor, a system will treasure what we measure. That is why choosing appropriate accountability measures and attaching values to those measures is extremely important. The accountability system established in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998 was a break-through in that it was a step toward accountability for student outcomes.

We recommend that new legislation streamline and strengthen the accountability system to focus on what we really want from adult basic education: student learning, completion of education credentials, and successful employment outcomes.

These measures are consistent with a set of common measures the administration has developed in order to assess various federal programs that contribute to workforce development, including adult basic and literacy education.

The unique contribution of adult basic education to workforce development is to ensure that adults have a solid academic foundation to prepare them for the challenges of the labor market. Thus, the adult basic education accountability system must maintain a focus on learning gains, education credentials, and workforce success.

The legislation should promote accountability by continuing to offer incentives for success, and much more explicit consequences for failure to perform, including both technical assistance and sanctions. States must be held accountable for taking action to improve local program results if the states are not meeting their goals. Ultimately, states should stop funding grantees that are not effectively serving the public.

Third, funding needs to be focused on what works, to encourage and motivate adult education programs to adopt promising instructional strategies. We propose that the legislation contain provisions to support research-based practices.

The President's Fiscal 2004 budget includes funding for national activities in the $584,000 requested for adult basic and literacy education, and proposes that Congress authorize the secretary to reserve a percentage of that total for national activities.

We will focus national projects on scientifically-based research on instructional practices, and helping states and instructors use research and evaluation findings to improve instruction.

The National Institute for Literacy, NIFL, can play an important role in the support and dissemination of research on literacy. The administration supports the reauthorization of NIFL to ensure that national research on adult literacy is coordinated with what we are learning about reading research across the life span.

Fourth, we will seek to provide more access and choice to adult education students. We will ask states to build the capacity of community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, to provide these services. Access will also be increased to participation of employers, and the promotion of workplace literacy projects.

We will open grant competitions to for-profit educational institutions. Other means are being explored to encourage states to create options for students, including financial incentives for agencies that successfully diversify their local providers, and increase the number of students enrolled.

Technology also has great promise for improving adults' access to education and capacity. The legislation should support advancement of technology for adult learning. We propose to continue emphasizing the development of technology applications, and a new approach to teaching through technology through the state and national leadership activities.

Finally, flexibility is key to literacy education. For the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, the Departments of Education and Labor will propose to reduce the administrative burden, and provide more flexibility in the establishment of local interagency relationships.

Basic and literacy education will continue to be a partner in workforce development. Together, the departments are developing provisions to encourage referrals, joint services, and other strategies for coordination, while increasing flexibility.

If the trends of the last decade continue, a total of 23 million new jobs will be created in the next 10 years. Eighty percent of the fastest growing sectors will require some post-secondary education. Adults without a high school diploma, or its equivalent, have no access to these jobs. Those with basic skills below the high school level have a very tough road ahead of them to maintain employment and self-sufficiency.

The vision of our proposal I have shared with you today addresses this concern. It is our goal that all American adults have opportunities to improve their basic and literacy skills in high-quality, research-based programs that will equip them to succeed in the next step of their education and employment.

I look forward to working with the committee to craft federal policy that will successfully support the realization of this vision. I would be happy now to answer any questions that you might have.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CAROL D'AMICO, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D.C. – APPENDIX C

Chairman McKeon. Thank you very much. How is it possible that a nation spending nearly three quarters of a trillion dollars on education at all levels can graduate students who cannot read and write, even at a basic level?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, until this point, as you know, we have allowed students to get through the system without ever having been tested on whether they can read and do math.

Congress passed No Child Left Behind, that I truly believe will address this issue over the time, and we will have fewer of those instances in many ways, because students now will not be

able to get out of school without being able to demonstrate they can read and do math.

Chairman McKeon. That should help the problem, as you said, over a period of time, or the long run, but we need to break the chain with your program here. And that will help us, if we can really address the problem with the adults.

You often mention improving literacy skills in your testimony. Literacy is often used in a very broad sense. What are the literacy skills you are referring to, and what percentage of all 2.7 million adult education participants are in need of these skills?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, one point of our testimony today, is to talk about the federal role in literacy, and to focus the federal role on improving the academic component of the literacy program: computational skills, reading skills, and English language acquisition.

The program is a partnership among federal, state, and local providers. What we are focusing on in this testimony is the academic component of the literacy program that will prepare adults for the next step in their lives. That is going to be further education training and a job, to move up the wage ladder and up the skill ladder.

So when we focus today on literacy, it's the academic preparation of literacy towards those ends.

Chairman McKeon. You know, sometimes, we cannot tell by looking at somebody's face whether they can read or not.

Dr. D'Amico. No.

Chairman McKeon. And sometimes, they learn to cover their lack of ability to read to avoid embarrassment. I had a friend years ago that and I think we were together in a church setting, and it came his turn to read, and he could not read. I could not believe it.

I mean, here was a guy that had his own business and seemed to be fairly successful. Since then, he has taught himself how to read. But I remember how surprised I was at that time.

I had another friend years ago, who was Hispanic. I was serving a mission for our church down in New Mexico. At times, we would be at their home and they would invite us in for dinner. He was a hard-working guy, and had a large family. He would come home at night, and would always read the paper with a dictionary. And he was, again, teaching himself to improve.

If people have that kind of willingness to learn, we should be able to provide the wherewithal to teach them so that they do not have to do it on their own. Thank you very much. Mr. Kildee?

Mr. Kildee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Madam Secretary. You propose standards for adult education. We require standards in the No Child Left Behind Act. How should we do this for

adult education?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, what we are suggesting here is that every state would develop its own set of standards for adult education. Given that the states have just gone through that exercise with No Child Left Behind, there is a good benchmark there for states to start with adult education, particularly if we're talking about English, language arts, math, and English acquisition.

So it would be a similar exercise in that every state would develop its set of standards and assessments that would measure the attainment of those standards.

Mr. Kildee. So you believe that the No Child Left Behind Act could give them some guidance for developing standards and testing.

Dr. D'Amico. It could. That is right.

Mr. Kildee. Thank you very much. Secretary Chao, in talking about the Administration's WIA bill, says it will be creating more comprehensive operations in the one-stop career center system by revising methods of funding infrastructure costs for those centers.

Does this mean that they plan to take some money off the top of the Department of Education appropriations for vocational education, adult education, as partners to pay for part of those centers?

Dr. D'Amico. I cannot speak to what the Secretary talked about. I do know that we are in discussions with the Department of Labor now about various ways that adult education will interface with the one-stops and the Workforce Investment Act. I believe that those will be worked out in very short order.

Mr. Kildee. Would you support having vocational education paying part of the infrastructure costs, or adult education, for those centers?

Dr. D'Amico. There are a lot of things that we are talking about right now, in support of those one-stops, so I am not prepared to say at this time what we will finally end up with. But we have lots of ideas on the table.

Mr. Kildee. I think, as you know, we are concerned about making sure we have a very, very top-notch vocational education program as well as adult education.

We also want to have a sure flow of dollars to run the one-stop centers. Do you have any suggestions of how we, as Congress, can guarantee this funding? Right now, partners, very often, put in a certain percentage. Do you have any suggestions as to how, without perhaps taking money away from vocational education or adult education, that we could find a sure source, a steady, predictable source of funding for the one-stop centers?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, as I mentioned, we are having discussions between the two departments on many options. I am sure we will be conveying those suggestions in relatively short order, as we

discuss the reauthorization of WIA.

Mr. Kildee. Okay. Well, we would certainly welcome that. Buck and I put this together in 1998, and it's a good bill, it's a very good bill. I think as we make adjustments, as we do every four or five years - we want to make sure that we take the best of what we have already written, and add the best. We need careful guidance from both the Department of Education and the Department of Labor.

I used to half-jokingly say - and it's certainly not the case any more - when I first came out here 27 years ago, that we should have at least one telephone line between the Department of Education and the Department of Labor. You have done more than that.

Dr. D'Amico. We have.

Mr. Kildee. It's a much better collaboration now, and I certainly appreciate that.

Dr. D'Amico. Thank you.

Mr. Kildee. And thank you for your testimony.

Chairman McKeon. Dr. Gingrey?

Dr. Gingrey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, you mentioned that upwards of, I think you said, 50 percent of new college students need to take remedial courses. I know in my state of Georgia, we have a HOPE Scholarship program, which is a wonderful program, that Governor Miller - now Senator Miller – started. It has been a great success.

However, when it first started, students, of course, were eligible for that HOPE scholarship if they had a B average. Now it is a B average just in core curriculum. But an alarming number of those students with B averages were taking remedial courses at our flagship university, University of Georgia.

And you know, I was just wondering as I heard your testimony, why do you think students graduate from high school without mastering these basic skills and why do, nationwide, 50 percent of students who have close to a B average, end up in our colleges and universities having to take all these remedial courses that they get no credit for?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, I think the research would show that not enough of our students are taking the rigorous core academics they need to succeed in college. That is why there is a need for remediation.

One of the things that standards would do is to encourage a conversation between high schools and colleges on what the academic expectations for success are by colleges, and to make sure that the standards address those academic expectations.

We have a system now where there is not enough encouragement for the high schools and the community colleges, and the universities talk to each other about expectations. Therefore, the identification of standards would be one way to encourage that conversation.

Just simply not enough of our young students in high schools are taking core academic courses they need for success. Really, only a little over a third take the rigorous core that was recommended by Nation At Risk 20 years ago. We need to encourage our young people to take more rigorous courses.

I believe the identification of standards and calibrating those standards in adult education will lead to what you need for success in the next step of your life in post-secondary education and employment.

Dr. Gingrey. Great, thank you.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you.

Mr. Ryan? Left.

Mr. Holt?

Mr. Holt. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, there is-you have-well, first of all, I want to associate myself with the comments of Mr. Kildee, and pursue a little bit some of his line of questioning, also.

You have talked a lot about gauging the cost effectiveness-I mean, the Department has talked a lot about gauging the cost effectiveness of the workforce training and education programs. How-for this large population of functionally illiterate people, how do you gauge the cost effectiveness of the services that you provide?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, in 1998, in the law, as I said in my testimony, it went a long way in terms of trying to build some accountability into the system. So there are measures that are in the law that we use to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, and they were given to us in the law, and I applaud Congress at the time for putting in accountability measures in the adult education program, and we intend to suggest building on those measures.

So it is whether students had an academic gain, it's whether they got their high school credential, a diploma or a GED. Did they get a job, as a result of their participation? And did they advance and retain that job? So those measures are appropriately inside the law.

Mr. Holt. And by that scale, by those measures, what progress would you say has been made since 1998?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, it is hard to draw a national picture on it, Mr. Holt, because every state, by law, sets their own performance measures, and the state and the department negotiate those

performance measures.

So it is different for each state, and there is not an easy way to take the national view, because the measures are not comparable across the country. So we look at it on a state-by-state basis. It is hard to draw a national picture.

Mr. Holt. Are you suggesting then, Madam Secretary, that in reauthorizing this, we should apply national standards of accountability, national standards of cost effectiveness, a single measure?

Dr. D'Amico. No, I am not suggesting that. I am suggesting -

Mr. Holt. Well, you are having some trouble, I think, in giving me a sense of what progress has been made since 1998.

Dr. D'Amico. I would say it is state-by-state. The progress that has been made is the focus on attainment of learning, a focus on high school credentials, and a focus on a job.

The standards that we are suggesting that each state put in would help the states define academic attainment in math, reading, and language proficiency.

Mr. Holt. And those exist now, or those have yet to be created?

Dr. D'Amico. According to what we determine, there are not too many states that actually have adopted academic standards for their adult education program.

Mr. Holt. So again, are you suggesting that we mandate that, nationally?

Dr. D'Amico. Not a national set of standards, but that we require the states to have their own set of academic standards for adult education in reading, language arts, math, and English acquisition.

Mr. Holt. Now, the funding that is in the request for Fiscal Year 2004, just shy of $600 million, is that adequate?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, we need to do more with what we have. Our proposals along access and choice will expand the programs with what we have. We can do more with what we have, and we should do more with what we have.

Mr. Holt. If there are, as I understand, nearly 100 million functionally illiterate, people whose literacy is somewhat limited or compromised, that's about $5 per person per year. Is this-includes outreach as well as education?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, as I mentioned, this program is designed to be a partnership among the federal government, state government, and local providers. So there are a lot of resources that go into this program at the state and local level.

What we would do with standards and the expansion of capacity is to make sure that once you have a set of standards in place, then you can expand the providers because you know what the academic expectations are for that program.

So the combination of our ideas to expand access and create standards that employers, community organizations and colleges could use, would go a long way to expanding capacity without the need to expand the resources.

Mr. Holt. Well, I see my time has expired. At another time I would like to explore how this $5 per person can be leveraged to actually produce literacy. Thank you.

Chairman McKeon. The vice chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. Isakson.

Mr. Isakson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary D'Amico, tell me if I am right. Isn't the reason it was so difficult to answer Mr. Holt and Mr. Kildee's question regarding uniform standards, because the 50 states are all over the board in terms of the degree they make a commitment to adult and technical education?

Dr. D'Amico. It is.

Mr. Isakson. That is what I have found. Some states are tremendous. Others have very little adult and technical education. That is why it is so difficult to make it uniform.

Second thing, you said the $64,000 answer. The biggest problem we have is that there is no communication between K-12, adult and technical, and the university systems and colleges of the state. There is absolutely no collaboration, which was causing us, in Georgia, huge problems.

I know we are talking about $591 million, which in the scheme of things is a relatively small amount, given the investment in adult and technical education. However, one thing we could do to get states' attention is to require them to have a collaboration board, or some type of joint board, where the state board of education, the regents, or university system, chancellors, and adult and technical education actually do collaborate.

I mean, some may just create a board to fill in the blank, but I really think that is our single biggest problem, which leads me to this question. In your testimony, you said you looked forward to discussing our proposal for secondary technical education serving youth and high schools and colleges.

Does that portend that you are going to reach into the high schools and try and identify people and begin collaborating so we can save some of them earlier, and get them on the right track towards a technical education? Is that what that means? Since you mentioned high school and adult, I did not know if that is what was meant, or not.

Dr. D'Amico. Was it in the combination of standards? Was it the conversation about standards?

Mr. Isakson. It was talking about the educational pipeline to better equip future workers.

Dr. D'Amico. Okay. This adult education is part of the pipeline for getting people ready for the workforce. The unique contribution that we make in the Department of Education is making sure that people, whether they are adults or high school students, are academically prepared to be part of that pipeline. And I think that was the context that I was talking about.

I believe that when Mr. McKeon and I were talking, that No Child Left Behind, once it takes full effect, will reduce the need for adult education over time, because we will catch a lot of those students before they leave high school without basic academic skills.

Mr. Isakson. Yes, I think it will reduce the remediation and retraining, or training components in English and math. I think it will enhance adult education, in terms of doing what everybody thinks it already does, which is technical training for skilled workers.

You are right, that literacy, is our big problem. I would encourage you, when you look at it on this collaboration between K-12, adult, technical, and universities, to also think about one of the problems we have in America is a kid that is in high school, the goal for continuing education is generally set on the academic requirements to be admitted to a university or a college.

They go visit colleges and universities, and take the SATs. There really is, sophomore, junior, and senior year, nothing that exposes them to adult and technical education. This is where many of our kids should go from high school for a variety of reasons.

So hopefully, if we can promote collaboration, we can also promote exposure and a track, for kids who are in high school to be exposed to adult and technical education opportunities. There are a myriad of great jobs that adult and technical training gives people to become very gainfully employed individuals. However, there is a disconnect between the K-12 environment and the track to go to a technical school. They miss the opportunity all together.

But I enjoyed your testimony, I appreciate what you're doing, and I look forward to the specific proposals.

Dr. D'Amico. Thank you.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. Mr. Hinojosa?

Mr. Hinojosa. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary D'Amico, thank you for your testimony today. I appreciate the tremendous responsibility you share in helping our workforce develop, the job skills, and the confidence they need to find quality employment.

On page seven of your testimony, you outline a vision for adult basic and literacy education. I certainly agree with you on those points. They are very applicable, especially in my congressional district. And I look forward to seeing your ideas implemented.

But I would like your vision even more if you would include within or among your goals for training the individuals a curriculum for basic financial literacy. We have many constituents in my area that do not have a banking account. They do not trust the banks, they do not know how to handle the financial statements, and many of the requirements of handling a bank account.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation has developed Money Smart, a program to teach adults about opening and maintaining checking accounts, about saving money, about buying a home, and having responsible credit.

As a former businessman who represents a district with thousands of these unbanked residents, I obviously support this type of training. I strongly urge you that, in addition to language and other skills being taught through your programs, that your trainees also receive opportunities to become more financially prepared. What has your office been doing in this regard?

Dr. D'Amico. I am not sure that our office has a financial literacy program. I do know that in many of the local programs, this is a component of their adult education program, because I, myself, have seen it in a couple of sites where they use it as a way to teach math, or a way to teach being a good citizen. So I do know that it does go on in many of our local programs.

Mr. Hinojosa. Let me share with you that this weekend our senior senator from Texas, Kay Bailey Hutchison, and I participated in a women's conference, a workshop for over 300 women who want to be empowered and given opportunities to learn more and become effective community leaders.

And one of the components of that training program that they had all day, from 8:00 in the morning until 5:00 in the afternoon, was this that we're talking about, financial literacy, and financial knowledge. And that was one that had the most participants, one that had very lively discussions and questions. So I know that there is a great need, and I wish that you would take a look at what I am asking, and see if there are ways in which your office can offer that.

I have one question on vocational education that I would like to ask you. Our present administration's budget proposes to allow states to transfer their vocational education funding to Title I programs. Do you support such a proposal? And second part, wouldn't this eviscerate vocational education in many states like Texas?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, I am not here today to talk about that particular proposal. I am looking forward to the day when I do that.

We have issued a four-page blueprint on our ideas, or principles, on the reauthorization of vocational education. Those are available, I would be happy to share them with you. We are working on the details of that proposal that, hopefully, that we can send out in late spring and early summer. So we will be back in touch on that.

Mr. Hinojosa. Well, if I can get a copy of that four-page paper that you mentioned, I would love to have one.

Dr. D'Amico. Absolutely. We will get it to you.

Mr. Hinojosa. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. Mr. Van Hollen?

Mr. Van Hollen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make one comment, and get your feedback. I represent an area right outside Washington, D.C., in Montgomery County and parts of Prince George's County. It's an area where we have a very large immigrant population. About 50,000 adults in my congressional district do not-cannot-speak English. And I know that's an important component of your efforts.

If you could just speak generally to the type of focus you think we should be putting on that issue as we approach this reauthorization, and whether you have any specific recommendations in that area that you recommend we look at.

Dr. D'Amico. Well, you are correct. I do not know if you were here at the beginning of the testimony, but we talked about how 42 percent of the participants in the adult education program now are there for English acquisition. So it is a big part of the program, and a growing one in just about every state.

With regard to the issues that we talked about, including English acquisition, the focus should be on: fluency in English language to be successful in the workplace, and in post-secondary education in training; implementing standards for the instruction so that quality programs lead to English acquisition; and the performance measures that we use focus on acquisition of English fluency.

We are focused on that issue, and making sure that we are measuring English acquisition fluency in those programs.

Mr. Van Hollen. As part of the reauthorization, are you talking about requiring the states to provide you with new measures that they're not providing now, or new standards?

Dr. D'Amico. To make sure that the states have standards for those programs that, again, focus on the acquisition of language.

Mr. Van Hollen. Right. And those standards would be reviewed by you to determine their sufficiency?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, I do not think we have talked about the details of the degree of federal involvement in those standards, but we certainly intend to require the states to have standards in those programs.

Mr. Van Hollen. All right. And would you be reviewing their measures, to some extent?

Dr. D'Amico. We negotiate the performance measures now with the states.

Mr. Van Hollen. Okay. Thank you.

Dr. D'Amico. We also talked in my testimony about making sure that the states have enough authority to hold accountable the local programs for those measures. Because today, that authority is not as strong as what it could be.

Mr. Van Hollen. Okay, thank you.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. Mr. Ehlers?

Mr. Ehlers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding a hearing on this important topic. Thank you for being here, I appreciate that.

In Michigan, we have had an active vocational and adult education program for years, and it has certainly paid off. But the first stage, of course, is to have people become educated well enough to get a meaningful job.

The second stage is, of course, to find more than just a meaningful job, but rather a well-paying job. And lately, the concentration has been on that. I have been told that American industry is spending something on the area of $60 billion a year on workplace training. Much of that has to do with modern technology, particularly math and science-related issues.

To what extent are your programs moving into that area? After you get people past the first stages of English acquisition, high school or GED, to what extent do you get into the math and science aspects, since more and more jobs are demanding some technical competence?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, as we talked about today, the focus right now on the adult literacy programs is making sure that adults have the literacy levels in reading, math, language arts, and English acquisition, up to the high school equivalent level.

If they have that, then there are a lot of opportunities for them to expand their educational opportunities at the post-high school side. Our focus is making sure they are ready to do that through Pell Grants, and a lot of other mechanisms that we have in place to help students and young adults continue their education. Our focus is making sure they get to that level, and can have the academic foundation to participate in those programs.

Mr. Ehlers. I guess my question is, in a sense, challenging you to go beyond that. If it is a matter of money, that is something we can try to deal with. But I think it is also important for you to challenge us on that score if you do not have the funds to do that.

But more and more of the workplace training is going to require that, and frequently it's more cost-effective to do it as part of an ongoing adult ed program, rather than burdening the businesses, which, as I said, are spending substantial amounts of money at this.

Dr. D'Amico. Well, many of the businesses are spending their own money on remediation in English in math. And if we can address that issue, that would go a long way to freeing their dollars up so that they could do higher level education and training.

Mr. Ehlers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. Mr. Tierney?

Mr. Tierney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon.

Dr. D'Amico. Good afternoon.

Mr. Tierney. Thanks for your testimony today. I am sorry I missed it, but I will be sure to read it. I had some questions that I wanted to ask about your written testimony, and if you have answered them before I apologize for that, but I am curious to know.

You talk about legislation that should support increased participation of employers and promote workplace literacy projects, which is an area that I have been dealing with in my district extensively. We have had some problems, though, in keeping the employers engaged in those kinds of programs.

We find-and I do not know if you have found this in your travels, or what you might recommend, or have been recommending to do about it-as larger companies buy up more local companies, they have been disassembling the literacy programs that we have had.

And their answer to it is rather than encumber the workplace where we have programs that people might start a half-hour before work on the clock, and stay a little longer, they will give a smaller donation to some literacy group within the community and walk away.

Have you any ideas about how we can-first of all, what has been your experience? Have you also seen success with programs that are placed in the workplace and work as I described? Secondly, do you notice this trend as you travel around the country, or is it just distinct to our state and district? And third, what do you recommend to try and make sure that we have more participation of employers, and promote workplace literacy initiatives?

Dr. D'Amico. First, we do have ideas on some model programs in workplace literacy. We are putting together some projects now. I have not heard about this issue of reduction in workplace literacy programs, but I can certainly have our staff check and let you know.

As to how we encourage those, I believe there is a number of ways we can do that. Number one, we have talked about states adopting a set of academic standards in literacy for adults. I think employers get a little frustrated because they just do not have the tools they need to do a really good job in these programs.

But if the state has a set of academic standards, it would be a lot easier for the employer to take those standards and incorporate those standards into their training programs. We need to give

the tools to the employer to help do a credible job.

I think another way to address this issue is by building the capacity in the community, so that there are other providers that are offering adult literacy programs in a variety of ways and times that are convenient to adults, and they partner with the employers.

Mr. Tierney. Well, that's-see, we have had a wide array of different groups within the community providing these services. And they are the ones that usually work a deal with the employer to go ahead and provide the literacy program in the employment place.

And I am not going to debate you on standards right now, but I do not think standards are the biggest problem that we have. I think getting the employers to continue the programs and then funding them is our biggest problem.

We have had a line-we have 19,000 people in my state waiting to get into literacy programs. That's not a standards issue, that's a how do I get in and get some help issue. So what do you recommend about that? What's the administration going to do about putting its money where its mouth is?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, I mentioned that we could do a lot more with the money that we have.

Mr. Tierney. How so? Do you think we're wasting the money on literacy programs?

Dr. D'Amico. I would not use that word.

Mr. Tierney. I hope not.

Dr. D'Amico. I would say that what we would need to do are the things that we have talked about. We need to build the capacity of various organizations and communities to provide this service, including employers.

Mr. Tierney. How are we not doing that, Dr. D'Amico? I mean, how-

Dr. D'Amico. Well, in your state it is a little different. When you look at a national picture, there are some states where there is not a lot of diversification of providers of this program. Your state is an exception.

Mr. Tierney. Well, I am parochial like that. So I assume that you have some states where diversification may be an issue, and I am going to put that aside for a second and focus on states like Massachusetts, where we have a wide array of people and enough capacity within what we can pay for, but we really have a resource issue. So how are we going to deal with that?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, the program is a partnership between the federal, state, and local community organizations. It was never intended to be a federal program.

Mr. Tierney. I understand that. I am just wondering-we match those funds, the state level matches what the Federal Government gives. Obviously, if we give some more and they match it, now we're moving to 19,000 people_

Dr. D'Amico. Well, there is a variation on that match across the country. It is not uniform. I think we need to turn our attention, first and foremost, to quality, efficiency, and making sure that there is a great deal of access to these programs. Again, your state is -

Mr. Tierney. I was going to say, you're walking around with 19,000 people in a waiting line, that's not access. And how else are you going to deal with the access issue unless you increase the resources at the state, as well as the Federal Government? There is a 28 percent match, so you know, we can leverage this thing and get going on that.

But the waiting lines are enormous, and the quality has not been a huge issue in my state. Maybe it has been in some others, but you know, we've got some pretty good quality programs coming out with some very dedicated people who are well-trained and focused.

We have got an array of people that are involved in this, different community organizations that are, you know, giving their life's work to this. And it just comes out we're bumping up against a stone wall, and you know, can we get the Federal Government to help leverage some more money out of the state so that we can increase the capacity. You do not see any hope for that?

Dr. D'Amico. Well, as I said, not every state operates as Massachusetts does, and we look at a national picture. Many of the things that we are suggesting will help a lot of states build the capacity and the quality of these programs, as well as make the standards and expectations more accessible so that technology, community groups, and employers can help deliver these programs, on a national picture. I am not necessarily addressing your state in particular at this point.

Mr. Tierney. No, I am afraid you have not at all.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. I would like to recognize Bill Brock, former senator and former Secretary of Labor. What have I left out? We are happy to have you with us here today. Thank you. Mr. Burns? Excuse me.

Mr. Kildee. I would like to also acknowledge Mr. Brock. Both sides of the aisle always enjoyed working with him, and he was a man of great integrity and great ability. Good to have you here.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. Mr. Burns?

Mr. Burns. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Dr. D'Amico, for being here today and sharing your expertise with us.

As a Georgian, as one who has been involved in education for over 20 years, and as the husband of a lady who has taught adult and technical education for over a decade, I have an understanding of the challenges that you face, and the opportunities that go with it.

Certainly the major focus in adult and technical education is to provide an individual with skills that allow them to enter the workforce. So what we are trying to do is move people who may not have had opportunities in the past, give them those new opportunities, and have them then move into a work environment that is productive and positive.

I reviewed your written comments, and I am sure in your presentation today, you talked about how the Department of Education and the Department of Labor can work cooperatively together to transition individuals from perhaps a position of not having the skills and the abilities they need to a position of gainful employment.

Could you give us some ideas that we could take and look at to increase the coordination between Labor and Education, and specifically in the one-stop system?

Dr. D'Amico. As I mentioned, we are working closely with the Department of Labor to come up with specific strategies on that issue so that the barriers to the joint referrals of programs from the one-stop into these programs have these agreements and partnerships.

So we have a variety of strategies that we will be bringing forward on how to closer connect these two programs. We are dedicated to doing that.

Mr. Burns. Let me just comment that, perhaps unlike Massachusetts, Georgia has had a very positive experience with adult and technical education through the Georgia Department of Adult and Technical Education, and it has made a significant difference in our communities. I have seen individuals work through these fundamental skill set programs, and then advance to much higher-paying jobs, and much greater opportunities, including the medical profession and the teaching profession. So you see people who can utilize this system as a means of personal development.

And I think the challenge that we face is to make it more efficient and more available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. D'Amico. Georgia has done a good job, at the state level, of making those connections.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you very much, Madam Secretary. I want to thank you for your testimony, for being here today, and we will continue to work together as we go forward on this reauthorization. Thank you very much.

Dr. D'Amico. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity.

Chairman McKeon. I would like to ask the next panel if you would please come forward and take your seats. Thank you. We appreciate you all being here as our next panel. Let me introduce you at this time.

Dr. Beth Buehlmann is the executive director for the Center for Workforce Preparation, where she has managed education and workforce policy for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce since

1998.

Prior to her current position, she worked as the director of federal relations for California State University. In addition, Dr. Buehlmann has served on the workforce excellence board, and the National Commission on the High School Senior Year.

The next panelist will be Ms. Ann-Marie Panella, who has served as the director of human resources and community liaison at MCS Industries, Inc. since 1993. She played a vital role in creating an alliance between MCS Industries and a local community college in order to provide employees with an opportunity to participate in adult literacy programs.

Prior to her current position, she was the director of human resources for the Visiting Nurse Association of Bethlehem and Vicinity. Ms. Panella also serves as a member of the board of supervisors for the township of Palmer, Pennsylvania.

Next will be Dr. Randy Whitfield. She is the associate vice president of academic and student services of the basic skills department at the North Carolina Community College system. Dr. Whitfield also serves as the chairperson of the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium, and the National Counsel of State Directors of Adult Education.

Previously, she worked as a consultant for Levi Strauss and Company, where she played a major role in planning and implementing a national workplace literacy program. In San Francisco, or-

Dr. Whitfield. Tennessee.

Chairman McKeon. Tennessee. Well, that is close to San Francisco.

Chairman McKeon. In addition, she is the co-author of two books, Workplace Job-Specific Skills Programs: The How To Do It Manual, and Adult Basic Skills Instructor Training Manual. They both sound like how-to-do-it books.

And our final panelist will be Ms. Hermelinda Morales Morales, a native of Mexico. She received her American citizenship in 2002 and is a current participant in adult education classes to learn English as a second language. Ms. Morales has greatly improved her language skills, and with the assistance of a volunteer tutor, is preparing to take the GED exam. Congratulations. She has children who attend a local elementary school.

Welcome. We are happy to have all of you here today. I remind members that the same five-minute rule for questioning will apply after the panel has given their messages, and we will begin with Dr. Buehlmann.

STATEMENT OF BETH B. BUEHLMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR WORKFORCE PREPARATION, U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Dr. Buehlmann. Good afternoon. My name is Beth Buehlmann, and I am the executive director of the Center for Workforce Preparation, CWP, a non-profit affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. I am pleased to have been invited to testify today, and I commend the subcommittee for holding this hearing on improving adult education.

Finding qualified workers has consistently been identified as a priority and an ongoing challenge for chambers, and the small and mid-size businesses they represent. CWP partners with state and local chambers to help their business members secure the workforce they need to be competitive in the 21st century economy.

Three surveys, conducted by the Center for Workforce Preparation between April 2001 and January 2003, confirmed that employers are most concerned about the skill level of their workforce when it comes to remaining competitive.

CWP helps businesses connect with the already existing resources in communities to help them hire, train, retain, and advance workers in highly competitive market places.

Unfortunately, many American workers do not have the basic skills required to excel in modern workplaces. According to the Hudson Institute, 60 percent of all jobs in the 21st Century will require skills that only 20 percent of the current workforce has.

Today's workplaces require employees with higher and more varied skills than the traditional workplaces of the past. Jobs are being wholly restructured every seven years, resulting in fewer workers remaining competitive in their existing jobs, without continually learning new skills.

With business success riding on workforce competence, workplace literacy is an urgent business issue that demands employers' attention. These realities are intensifying, not going away. Assuring that workers have these skills is a long-term problem that requires a long-range commitment.

Employers pay the price for lack of worker skills through poor performance, reduced efficiency, high turnover, and low morale. The direct economic benefits of workplace education programs, including increased productivity, reduced time on task, improved health and safety records, and increased consumer and customer and employee retention, are important and measurable results.

The indirect economic benefits, such as improved quality of work, better team performance, more positive attitudes, and increased flexibility, are less tangible and more difficult to measure.

Still, employers recognize that these intangibles contribute enormously to organizational performance.

Despite the substantial and increasing need for improving workplace literacy, and the bottom line business benefits that come from training workers, there are relatively few workplace education programs. One reason may be that employers simply do not know where to start, and do not know what resources are available in their communities to help them.

I would like to tell you about one company that has actively promoted literacy in the workplace. And by doing so, created a corporate culture of life-long learning. Larry Liebenow, the chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's board of directors, and CEO of Quaker Fabric Corporation, believes that employers who are students for life make for a more skilled workforce, a stronger company, and a better community.

Because of this belief, he established an in-house learning center, where Quaker Fabric employees can learn basic skills and math skills to computer skills and supervisory training, all without ever leaving their workplace.

Not only does Quaker Fabric benefit because it can hire and retain good employees, but employees benefit because they can meet their career development expectations. Quaker Fabric was described as a leader and role model on this issue by the mayor of Fall River, Massachusetts, at the recent announcement of a community initiative to improve reading skills for parents and children through an Even Start Grant.

All too often, however, programs such as the one at Quaker Fabric are dependent on the person in the leadership position to make them happen. CWP believes that chambers can serve in this leadership capacity for small and mid-sized businesses, helping to address the challenges of too few skilled workers.

In April 2002, we released a literacy tool kit called, "A Chamber Guide to Workplace Literacy: Higher Skills, Bottom-Line Results." It makes a strong case for workforce education programs and community initiatives to assist adult learners. It is one example of the CWP work that we do with our many partners.

Our work is unique because information we provide is presented from the employer point of view. We work with chambers to build relationships so that they can retain and advance entry-level workers. The focus is on dual customers, employers and participants, not dual systems.

There is a role the government can play, and this role includes connecting adult education programs as a core service to one-stop career centers, including the availability of adult basic education and literacy skills training as one of the criteria for certifying one-stop career centers, linking adult education programs to the skills needed in the 21st century workplace through workforce investment boards, and supporting the development of work-readiness credentials that certify mastery of the knowledge and skills required by employers.

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The bottom line is employers in our economy need workers with the right skills, and access to adult education is one way to achieve this goal. I thank the chairman and the subcommittee for the opportunity, and welcome your questions.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BETH B. BUEHLMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR WORKFORCE PREPARATION, U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – APPENDIX D

Chairman McKeon. Thank you very much.

Ms. Panella?

STATEMENT OF ANN-MARIE C. PANELLA, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, MCS INDUSTRIES, INC., EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA

Ms. Panella. My name is Ann-Marie Panella, and I am the director of human resources with MCS Industries. MCS is located in Northampton County, Pennsylvania, and had a population of 270,000. We are in Easton, and we are one of the larger employers, with 400 employees.

We are a manufacturer, and we have seen our workforce changing and our work changing. It is changing because as we become more sophisticated, we need a more sophisticated workforce. We now import many products, rather than manufacturing them here. We need people in distribution, and that's all computerized.

Of the last 25 people I hired, 20 percent of them have not graduated high school, 40 percent of them have English as a second language and are immigrants. Only 11 percent have their GEDs. And that is the workforce that I deal with on a day-to-day basis.

When I started there and realized that I had to write memos below a fifth grade reading level in order to be understood, I realized that we needed to do something. We, as an employer, needed to build a foundation for education.

Many of our employees had dropped out of school because of family obligations. I have quite a number of single-parent households, and they do not want their children to follow that closely in their footsteps and drop out.

Adult-based education is a three-pronged education system. We talk about GEDs constantly, okay? That is a diploma. But there is more than that. There is English as a second language, and there is adult basic education. I want my employees to be reading at a sixth grade reading level.

We talk here about college level, but there is a whole section of the population that cannot go that far and that do not have the ability to go that far. But are we going to leave them behind? No, we are not going to leave them behind. We are going to bring them forward, if for any other reason than their work ethic.

My grandparents did not speak English and did not graduate school, either. It took two generations to get someone to graduate college. But no one gave up. And why are we giving up? Employers must learn that education is the foundation of their business.

We make picture frames. It is not rocket science, okay? You put four pieces of wood together and you have a picture frame. The thing is, if you do not get those four pieces in the right corners, you do not have a good picture frame. And then we cannot sell it.

Just as an aside, I am originally from New York, not Pennsylvania, in case you did not catch that.

Ms. Panella. So what we have to realize is that all levels of manufacturing need to be worked with.

I had an employee come to me after attending our English as a Second Language course for three years, and she said, ``My son is in the third grade, and for the first time ever I could read to him. For the first time ever.'' You cannot imagine the joy in that woman's face.

Do we need money for this? Yes. But do we, as employers, need to wake up and start doing our part? Yes. One way we funded it was through vending machines. You cannot always ask the president for money at my company, but vending machines give rebates. So that goes back to the employees in education.

Now that the State of Pennsylvania has given us some grants, we have a scholarship program for employees, their children, and their grandchildren. You can only break the cycle of poverty through education. It is the only way. So maybe my employees will not go to college, but their children or their grandchildren will. And we will help them. Thank you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANN-MARIE C. PANELLA, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, MCS INDUSTRIES, INC., EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA – APPENDIX E

Chairman McKeon. Thank you very much.

Dr. Whitfield?

STATEMENT OF RANDY WHITFIELD, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AND STUDENT SERVICES, BASIC SKILLS DEPARTMENT, NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Dr. Whitfield. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to talk about adult education. I am here as a state director of adult education, but also in another role; I am the chairperson of the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education.

And in that role, I submitted separate testimony to you, with a document called ``Bottom Lines'' that talks about what the state directors of adult education want for reauthorization. What I

am going to share today is what I want, and it is a part of the ``Bottom Lines."

Many state directors, including me, not only administer the programs, but we have also taught in them. And we know what improvements are needed. After teaching developmental studies to community college freshman for over 15 years, I taught an adult education class to 16 mechanics in a local plant, six of whom were beginning-level readers.

With degrees in teaching, reading and English, I had knowledge of the scope and sequence of the skills needed, and I also knew that adults were learners in a hurry. They want to apply tomorrow what they learned in class today. So with a collection of menus from local restaurants, information from the plants, and textbooks with practice exercises, I began helping these individuals.

The day I decided to switch to adult education full time was the day that one of the beginning-level students stood up in class, and bragged that he had gotten a letter from the company and could read every word. We stood up and cheered, and then we asked him what it said, and he said, ``It said I am going to be laid off the whole month. But I could read it." He was very proud.

So I hope that my being here today will help the many students we serve across the United States and in the outlying areas. You have talked about the fact that our programs serve 2,700,000 students. But there are over 94,000,000 who need our services.

I recently participated in one of the Department of Education's visioning meetings for reauthorization. One participant who was not in the field said she first started to look at those figures and criticize us for not serving the number we needed. But then she saw the amount of funding we got, and praised us for doing so much with so little.

So the state directors would like to have an increase in funding, over a period of years, making it gradual, but so that we can improve our program quality, become more accountable, and serve more students.

And you have already heard about the fact that many of our programs have waiting lists, particularly for the immigrant population. In North Carolina, companies call our programs frequently, begging for workplace programs for their immigrant employees.

We appreciate the additional funding we got from the federal government for English literacy civics education, but we would really prefer for that to be incorporated into our regular funding, because it is a little time consuming to manage as a set-aside.

Our programs not only do so much with so little, but we also do many different things for so many different people, something we think needs to be continued. I mean, we serve those who cannot read, those who just need a few classes to complete a GED, or a high school diploma, mothers who want to improve their skills to help their children, incarcerated people nearing their time to re-enter society, and the immigrants.

There has been a movement toward making our programs workforce development only, and although many states have extensive workplace education programs, we are so much more than that.

I once intervened between an instructor and an auditor. Class was in a workplace setting, and the auditor was questioning the fact that the instructor was teaching the student, a retired grandmother, by using children's books. The auditor said, ``That's not workplace education."

My response was, ``She is preparing the workforce of the future." When you teach an adult, according to reading expert Dr. Tom Stitch, you get ``double duty dollars," because your money helps the parent learn, who, in turn, helps the child learn. If you leave no adult behind, you will definitely leave no child behind.

We also feel very strongly about accountability, and we want to be accountable. We have been working with the U.S. Department of Education to develop our accountability methods, measures, and to strengthen them. But with all that we are asked to do, we need help, especially with teacher training, and the curriculum standards.

In current law, our state leadership funds that provide professional development were reduced from 15 percent to 12.5 percent. And that needs to be changed, because only 14 percent of our teachers in the program nationwide are full-time, making turnover a problem, and training even more imperative.

We also believe that another way to strengthen accountability is through a continued emphasis on the national program funding through the U.S. Department of Education, because we cannot handle all the issues surrounding accountability of program quality without them. But we would like to see that funding separated, as it has in the past, from the state grants.

So thank you, again, for letting me be here today to talk about adult education. Thank you.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF RANDY WHITFIELD, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AND STUDENT SERVICES, BASIC SKILLS DEPARTMENT, NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM – APPENDIX F

Chairman McKeon. Thank you.

Ms. Morales?

STATEMENT OF HERMELINDA MORALES, ADULT EDUCATION PARTICIPANT, AURORA, COLORADO

Ms. Morales. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman McKeon, Representative Kildee, and distinguished members of the community. I thank you for inviting me to testify on improving adult education for the 21st century.

My name is Hermelinda Morales, and I am here to tell you how the family literacy adult education programs have helped me and my family improve our situation. The fact that I can sit before you on this occasion proves that without the family literacy program, I was to be faced with a future that did not look bright.

I am from Mexico, but I lived in the United States for seven years. I came to the United States in search of the opportunities that this great country is known for. However, I did not speak any English, and this limited my opportunities to parking cars and cleaning hotel rooms. I knew that in order for me to move forward in the workplace, and provide a good life for my family, I would need to learn English.

My desire to increase my skills, and therefore my chances for success in the workplace, was only part of my motivation. I also wanted to be able to help my children succeed in school. I want to be a good role model. I was lucky, I found the Jamaica Elementary School family literacy program. This program receives money that you all here in Congress provide, along with additional money from the National Center for Family Literacy's Toyota Families in School grant.

I have attended this program for three years. In this program, I have learned to read, write, and speak English. As I stated earlier, before I started this program, I did not speak any English, and my opportunities were limited. However, as I learned English, I was able to find better work, and now I work for a company where I always communicate in English.

This family literacy adult education program has helped me very much to become independent. I am able to go to the doctor without an interpreter, conference with my children's teacher, and fill out necessary forms.

An example is when I applied for my citizenship. This helped me to understand what I was reading and writing during the interview. Now I am proud to say that I have accomplished my first goal. I am a U.S. citizen.

This family literacy program has positively impacted my entire family. It has helped me to understand my children's homework and to read messages from the children's teacher. I am now a much more involved parent in my children's education.

In the family literacy program, I am learning many ways to help my children with reading, writing, and math. Because my adult education program is also part of my family literacy program, I learn what my children are learning in their classroom, and my son feels happy because I am there with him. Parent time is very important, because the teachers make time to come in and show us how to help our children with reading and writing.

Family literacy is very important because when I came to the United States I could not communicate with other people in English. Now, I am an active member of my community.

I have set two goals, and I accomplished one of them so far. The first one was to learn English, to get my citizenship. Now that I have completed that, my second goal is to study hard

and get my GED to get a better job that pays more money to provide for my family.

In addition, there is no excuse from my not attending due to not having a baby-sitter. The family literacy program provides free day care for children who are not yet in school. I am very grateful to the volunteers who give their time to us.

The program could be even more successful to myself, as well as the other parents, if we could go more days with longer hours. Nights and weekend hours would be wonderful to those of us who work during the day.

In closing, without a doubt, I would not be as far as I am today without our family literacy program. Again, they taught me to speak English, to read English, to have better self-confidence, to move forward to get my GED, and most importantly, being able to understand and help my children with their growing education.

I know that the Congress wants to see certain programs work, and spend money only when there are good results. What family literacy and adult education have done for me is real. It works, thanks to you.

I encourage Congress to make family literacy an important part of adult education in the 21st century. Thank you very much.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HERMELINDA MORALES, ADULT EDUCATION PARTICIPANT, AURORA, COLORADO – APPENDIX G

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. That was great. I think we all learned a lesson from you, and from the things that you have accomplished in a very short time.

You need to set some other goals. College. Your children are not here with you?

Ms. Morales. No, no. They are with my mom, in Colorado.

Chairman McKeon. Too bad they could not have come to see you testify.

Ms. Morales. No.

Chairman McKeon. Not many people do this.

Ms. Morales. Yes. I am so nervous, I am sorry. I hope you understand.

Chairman McKeon. We are all nervous.

Ms. Morales. Yes.

Chairman McKeon. Well, thank you. That is a great panel. I do have some questions. I would kind of like to focus on Ms. Morales a little bit, because of what you have gone through.

Could you describe what the curriculum was like that helped you to learn to read and write English?

Ms. Morales. Well, my father came here to the United States when I was three months old. He always came and worked and then came back. And then we came and lived here.

I was a resident before, but I wished to be a U.S. citizen. So that is the most important part, because I want to learn English. And then I had three children, so I needed to know English to help them with homework and read every night. Now, every night, we read a book. I enjoy it very much.

Chairman McKeon. How old were you when you came?

Ms. Morales. I was 18 years old.

Chairman McKeon. And what education had you had in Mexico?

Ms. Morales. Well, the place where I lived in Mexico there was something like, I do not know, maybe elementary education. Just six years. And then nothing. Just six years in a school, and then we went to work in the fields. Yes.

Chairman McKeon. So you have really accomplished a lot. If someone came from Mexico with a college degree, it would be much easier for them to learn English, because they would have already learned Spanish, you know, with probably more education than you have had. So you have had two barriers to overcome, the language and the education barrier.

Ms. Morales. Yes, yes.

Chairman McKeon. So you are doing very well. I commend you. It is not easy.

Ms. Morales. Yes.

Chairman McKeon. I speak a little Spanish, and I think English is a lot harder to learn than Spanish.

Ms. Morales. Yes.

Chairman McKeon. But it is not an easy thing to do, and it would be much easier to just keep driving cars, keep washing, doing things where you did not have to stretch yourself and reach out.

Ms. Morales. Yes.

Chairman McKeon. So I commend you for the great thing that you are doing, and your children and grandchildren years from now will bless you for what you have done for them.

In the workplace, you talked about setting up schools and education. It is the employer's responsibility also to step up and do these things. Are you just fortunate that your company realized the importance, Ms. Panella? How did this happen? They just all of a sudden said, ``Let's be good citizens, let's help our employees learn more"?

Ms. Panella. Well, I am very lucky in that my employer is sympathetic to it. However, there was the realization that the workforce in our area was changing.

Chairman McKeon. Self-preservation.

Ms. Panella. Right. The number of immigrants that were coming in who did not have English, increased over 100 percent in the Latino population in Easton from 1990 to the year 2000. So we had to change.

There was also the realization that we could no longer be a manufacturer the way we were years ago. Now we have to be a computer-literate manufacturer. You cannot just turn your back on the people who have worked for you for 20 years because they were part of that prior group. So what you have to do is bring them forward with you. That is what made us decide to get involved.

Luckily, we had two resources right within our community, both the community college, as well as one of the non-profit organizations, where there were teachers available to us. It is very difficult for people to admit that they cannot read.

My staff and I noticed that when somebody takes an application and says, ``I am going to go out to the car, I will be back," it is usually because there is someone in -

Chairman McKeon. ``I forgot my glasses," or -

Ms. Panella. Right. There is someone in the car to fill out the application. So that is a flag to us.

People have to first admit to their employer that they cannot read about our 401(k) plan, or their benefits. That is difficult to do.

Chairman McKeon. Even if they could read, it is hard to understand some of those.

Ms. Panella. Some of those I have a problem with, yes.

Ms. Panella. But to admit to your employer, you have to feel rather secure to do that. We have people that are illiterate in two languages, their native tongue and English.

Chairman McKeon. And that was the point I was making with Ms. Morales. That is tougher.

Ms. Panella. That is much tougher, because you really have to be dedicated to it.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you very much. Mr. Kildee?

Mr. Kildee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Morales, how did you find out about the family literacy program?

Ms. Morales. When I went to enroll my son and my daughter in the school when they were going to kindergarten two years ago. They told me, and I decided to enroll in the school.

Mr. Kildee. Very good. So you found out through the school system?

Ms. Morales. Yes.

Mr. Kildee. I tell you who would be very happy, were he here today, is Mr. Bill Goodling. This man spent so much energy and time stressing to all of us, emphasizing to all of us, the importance of family literacy. And he would be dancing in the aisle here, having heard your testimony today, because you are exactly what he had in mind when he educated us on the importance of family literacy. You are certainly a great witness, and I thank you very, very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you.

Ms. Morales. Thank you for inviting me. I am so excited to be here. Thank you.

Mr. Kildee. Very good.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. Mr. Isakson?

Mr. Isakson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Buehlmann, in my district, and I think all over the country, there is a lot of concern with the American businesses actually going overseas for many of their employee services, data processing, data entry, and all those types of things. Have you focused on that at the U.S. Chamber?

The reason I am asking is because it seems like one of the reasons these jobs are going is because we do not have as many people at that level of literacy and ability in this country to do the job, so obviously they go overseas. It is not just a matter of cost. Have you ever looked into that, or do you have any idea?

Dr. Buehlmann. Well, I think what you are talking about is the very reason that the U.S. Chamber established the Center for Workforce Preparation, to help chambers become a resource for small and medium-sized businesses in their communities that do not have HR individuals or a way of understanding and pulling together what they need to have the qualified workforce that they need.

All our surveys indicate that to remain competitive, employers understand they need a literate and a skilled workforce. What we try to do is help them understand the resources in their

community to better support entry-level workers, that do not have those skills, so that they can create that pipeline of skilled, qualified workers that they need.

The whole purpose is to try to provide that, and increase that pipeline so that they will stay, as opposed to going overseas.

Mr. Isakson. The other benefit is the job does not end up going overseas, because we have a better workforce here, which is one of the things Ms. Panella is talking about, in terms of the company.

I was a chamber president, and we did a lot of workforce development. In fact, Dr. Whitfield, do you know Dr. Ken Breeden? He is the head of adult and technical education in Georgia, and we had a tremendous effort to get better literacy and better training, to get them into technical education, and then get them into employment programs, because there was a huge gap.

But I just think it's really interesting that Ms. Morales - I guess you came as a resident alien with your father, is that correct?

Ms. Morales. Yes.

Mr. Isakson. And then gained citizenship, and then immediately went and became literate to end up becoming a citizen to now ultimately being employed. That is the benefit of Bill Goodling's program, and really what it is all about.

I appreciate all three of you ladies and what you are doing in your various states to develop programs to get our underemployed workforce that we have in America today more employable by applying not only job training through the company and skill training, but also seeing that we get the literacy, as you were talking about, Dr. Whitfield, so they can build on that platform.

We appreciate all of you being here today, and appreciate your testifying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. Mr. Tierney?

Mr. Tierney. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for your testimony here today. Ms. Morales, you were terrific, and you did not look a bit nervous, and you should not have been, because you did a great job. Thank you.

I was wondering, Dr. Buehlmann if, in the course of your work, have you - are you able to give me an opinion of what you think the adequacy of the job that the Workforce Investment boards are doing in terms of basic skills development in literacy?

Dr. Buehlmann. Well, I think you're going to find disparate performance with respect to Workforce Investment boards. In terms of the ability to retain the interest of employers, in this field, and to be able to engage them in meaningful work towards creating a workforce system that makes sense in communities, I would venture to say that when you look at the Workforce

Investment Act, one of the things that you need to think about is what the role of that board is.

If it is only to oversee the Workforce Investment Act, then make that clear. But I do not think that was the vision that was created here. I think the vision was to create a workforce development system that brings together, and cuts across a variety of programs that all contribute to the efforts that we are representing.

The role needs to be clearly specified in the law, and it is to create that vision. It is to look at the needs in that community, it is to understand the resources that are there, and then put something together that makes sense for that community. That is the role that I think business wants to have, and is good at having, in terms of contributing.

If it is only to comply with specific federal laws, and to sign off on papers, then they are not going to continue to be engaged, or find value in that system. And so I think we have to create the purpose, and they will find the value in that system. I think we will improve, overall, the performance of the Workforce Investment boards across the country.

Mr. Tierney. Thank you very much. Dr. Whitfield, what if you had to just tell us two things that you think would be critical for our attention as we reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act, what would they be?

Dr. Whitfield. I think one thing would be what I mentioned earlier about professional development. As I said, in the current law, our ability to provide professional development was limited because we were capped at 12.5 percent for state leadership dollars, which included many more activities, and also professional development.

With all the new programs, the new accountability, and the discussion of curriculum standards, we need to be able to train our local program staff, and help them. Therefore, we do need an increase in the way to provide professional development. So an increase in that cap.

The second thing, I think, is an overall increase in funding. And as I said, we realize that it can be done gradually, over a period of years, but many states are having the waiting list, as you experience in your own state, and it is an access problem. We are trying very hard to meet the needs, particularly of the immigrants.

As I mentioned, in our state we have companies calling our colleges every day, wanting to provide workplace literacy programs. We try to do that. As a matter of fact, we provide programs to over 10,000 students in their workplace settings in North Carolina already. But we need to be able to do more.

Because of state budget crises, we have a lack of money available now. And our state is not the only one. So as we need more and more for the immigrant population and others, we are finding the revenues within each state dwindling. I would definitely say it is an issue of funding, and the ability to be flexible in how we spend the state leadership.

Mr. Tierney. Thank you. Ms. Panella, before my time runs out, I just wanted to know what experiences, if any, have you had with your local Workforce Investment board?

Ms. Panella. None.

Mr. Tierney. None? So it's all in-house? You do not reach out, or they do not reach out to you, either?

Ms. Panella. Well, I should not say none, but only within the last two years has it become known to us. Initially, it was just a cooperative effort with the community college.

I think that outreach is what is lacking. You know, I should not have felt as though I was creating this by myself.

Mr. Tierney. I think - I do not know, I think some of that may be that the Workforce Investment boards under the last reauthorization were just sort of getting their legs, and figuring out who they were.

I know in our state, we missed a whole year, waiting for the governor and the administration to sort of figure out what they were going to do about the statewide workforce investment council, and then, you know, they are developing it, and now we are seeing a better impact. And I hope that's the case. Your comments are helpful in that regard.

And the community college role is another role that I hope that we get a chance to really delve into, because they're being asked to do a lot, but this is one area where they can be the ones that interface with that industry group and do a substantial amount of work.

So again, thank you all for your testimony. Ms. Morales, congratulations to you, and thank you.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. The law was passed in 1998, and it took them a couple of years just to get up to speed. And I know the one-stops I visited, I was in one in Nevada a couple of weeks ago. It had a beautiful set-up, and they had people in there.

But I asked them how they were reaching out, because it is one of our biggest problems. We had a meeting with the chamber to see how we could reach out into the community to get known what there is.

Mr. Tierney. We have also had some displacements that have impacted, that were taking up almost all the retention, where Lucent had serious displacement. Took that whole Merrimack Valley region up and distracted them to that one population, almost. So it's also a capacity issue in many of those things.

Chairman McKeon. But it does take time for people to learn where these things are, and what is available. And hopefully it will get better every day. Mr. Keller?

Mr. Keller. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Whitfield, let me ask you. You mentioned the waiting lists in your state. How do the local employers in your area - say Raleigh - hear about the adult education programs that are offered in the workplace settings by community colleges?

Dr. Whitfield. There are a couple of ways. We have a book which we publish every year regarding workplace education in North Carolina.

However, because we are with a community college system, we do have better access to those workplace setting, since we have a person specifically assigned to be the liaison to business and industry on every community college campus.

Therefore, they go in and they do an assessment of what is needed. And if they find out they need the basic skills, then they contact the local program directors. We have 58 community colleges in our state, so they are spread throughout the state.

Mr. Keller. Well, do you think the typical personnel director in a large corporation area would know about the program?

Dr. Whitfield. Definitely. They do know about the program. Several years ago, the state of North Carolina brought together key participants in the welfare movement, and we did a series of programs where we brought business and industry leaders, community college people, and people from basic skills, and talked about the different things that we do. And it was highlighted.

Mr. Keller. Okay. Ms. Panella, you mentioned that one of the ways that you fund your programs is through revenues from vending machines.

Ms. Panella. Yes.

Mr. Keller. Tell me about that. Are those vending machines at the business, themselves?

Ms. Panella. Yes.

Mr. Keller. And the CEO decides that a portion of it should go to this, or how does that work?

Ms. Panella. They are in the lunch room, and that is the employees' money. It comes back to the employee, in terms of education.

Mr. Keller. And who makes the decision, like, where the revenues go? Is that you, as a personnel director, or -

Ms. Panella. I can go to the owners of the company and convince them that that would be a good place for it to go.

Mr. Keller. Yes. That is very creative. I have not heard of that as an idea before. I know that I hear about vending machines in the public schools all the time. I think they are used to fund

physical fitness programs, but I have not heard about them in the workplace.

In your opinion, is there anything else that businesses and educational institutions can do better to break the cycle of illiteracy in America?

Ms. Panella. I think that both business and the educational systems have to communicate. We cannot consider ourselves as two separate entities.

I was really happy to hear that the Department of Education and the Department of Labor do talk to each other. I think even on a smaller community level, we have to communicate better back and forth.

Mr. Keller. Okay. Ms. Morales, I want to congratulate you on your success. I think you need to run for Congress some day. Your values of hard work and common sense are much needed around here. Other than us on the panel, there are not a lot of us here that have those qualities, and I am not so sure about these guys - just kidding, my dear colleagues.

Mr. Keller. But tell me how old your children are.

Ms. Morales. How old?

Mr. Keller. Yes.

Ms. Morales. Well, I have twins. They are eight years old. And I have a younger daughter. She will be five years old next month.

Mr. Keller. Well, let's talk about your twins, who are eight years old. Now that you have learned to read and speak English pretty well, does that help you in teaching them to read at night?

Ms. Morales. Yes, yes. They read and I learn from them, and they learn from me. Yes, we are learning together.

Mr. Keller. Are they in second grade?

Ms. Morales. Yes, they are.

Mr. Keller. Second grade.

Ms. Morales. Yes.

Mr. Keller. And they are reading pretty well?

Ms. Morales. Yes.

Mr. Keller. Okay, well, thank you.

Ms. Morales. Thank you.

Mr. Keller. Dr. Buehlmann, tell me, do you think that most personnel directors in major businesses that would, say, be members of the chamber would know about what the different adult education opportunities are in their area?

And if so, how would they get the word about where to send someone who needs to learn to read, or learn English as a second language?

Dr. Buehlmann. Well, because chambers generally focus more on small and mid-sized businesses, I would venture to say that larger corporations do form collaboratives with their various education organizations and institutions in their community, because they do have separate HR departments, personnel individuals.

Small and mid-sized businesses, meaning 10 or fewer employees to 50 or fewer employees generally do not have those individual HR departments. And those are the workplaces and the employers that we try to reach to help them better understand what the resources are in their community to leverage these kinds of services. Not only does this help their bottom line, but their employees' bottom line as well.

Mr. Keller. Well, thank you. My time has expired. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. Mr. Payne?

Mr. Payne. Well, thank you very much. I really do not have any questions. I did not have an opportunity to hear the three previous witnesses, although I was fortunate enough to catch the star of the panel, Ms. Morales, and I, too, would like to compliment you for the fine job that you are doing, and the great example that you are setting for your children. And I certainly wish you continued success.

I might ask the other panelists, though, a lot of the emphasis, of course, is English as a Second Language. We are aware of the fact that many new residents in our country are Spanish-speaking.

I hate that word, ``alien." You know? What do you call it, ``illegal aliens," and stuff. We ought to come up with another name. I mean, I would hate to be considered an alien. It sounds like you're from outer space somewhere.

But what about the persons who simply had bad educations, just persons who, you know, dropped out of school, those who never were able to achieve in school? I see a lot of emphasis on the English as a Second Language and so forth, which we certainly need to do, since, as I have indicated, a large number of our new guests are from Spanish-speaking countries.

But do any of the three of you have any experience with people who were born here, their parents might have been illiterate, they have never learned literacy very much? How are you

finding that group, or do they come forth? Or what's your experience, any one of the three of you?

Dr. Whitfield. Although English as a Second Language is our growing population in North Carolina, our largest number of students are in our adult basic education program, where we serve over 60,000 a year in that program alone.

It is very difficult to get many of these students into our classes, but one of the ways that we have been successful in doing that is through our workplace literacy program.

I have had examples when I was teaching where the student would hear about the workplace class and be too embarrassed to go to that one. But they would then follow up and come to another class in the community, as a result. Word does get around about our programs, but I think it starts a lot through the workplace.

Mr. Payne. All right. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McKeon. Thank you. Actually, we had four stars. They were all great. It was a great panel, and you all were tremendous. We appreciate your time.

I have been thinking of a lot of things as this panel was going on. My grandfather came over from England at a young age, and he had to relearn English also, because they speak it differently-although it's a little easier than learning it totally new.

But I can remember that he dropped out of high school or junior high at a young age because kids kidded him, the way he talked, and he would get in a fight every day at school. Finally, he just quit school and went to work at the tannery. He was about five feet tall, but he had big arms. And I think of what people went through then, when they did not have the kind of programs that they have now.

When he was older and he would come over to visit us, we would always say, "Grandpa, talk English." We wanted him to talk cockney so that we could not understand him.

But this is a great work that we are involved in here, and we have some important things to do with this reauthorization, and I appreciate all of you taking your time and being here today, and I encourage you each to keep up what you are doing, and keep in close touch with us as we go through this reauthorization.

And now, if there is no further business for the committee, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:02 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX A – WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN HOWARD "BUCK" MCKEON, SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETETIVENESS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

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STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE HOWARD "BUCK" McKEON

CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATON AND THE WORKFORCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETITIVENESS

March 4, 2003

"IMPROVING ADULT EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY"

Good afternoon. Thank you all for coming, and for your willingness to testify before this subcommittee. We are looking forward to your comments, and the recommendations you will provide to improve the adult education system in the United States.

In 1998, the Workforce Investment Act was passed, which included Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. States have been working hard to implement this law for four years, and now here we are again ready to make further improvements.

As we begin the 21st Century, the need for an educated populace is critical to our success in maintaining our place in the global economy, and providing opportunities for all of our citizens to reach their highest potential. But the truth is, there is an increasing number of adults who have not mastered the basic skills, like the ability to read with fluency, write with clarity, and do simple computational math. Some of this is due to the fact that new immigrants currently amount to almost half of our net population growth and labor force expansion. It is estimated that by 2020, the nation will lose 43 million people who have some college level experience from the workforce, who will need to be replaced.

In the No Child Left Behind Act we have addressed many of these issues, by making sure that schools are held accountable for improving academic skills of students, tripling the funds for reading instruction, and expanding opportunities for school systems to help students in poor school districts improve their basic skills. That is the first line of defense for making sure all citizens know at least the basic skills, but there are many individuals who have been left behind already. That population includes adults who have dropped out of school, been passed on through the grades without ever mastering the basics, or an increasing number of adults who have immigrated to the United States and do not have English as their first language.

Certainly the federal Adult Education program cannot solve all the problems we have, but we can do our best to target the resources towards the most critical needs of our citizens.

I believe this is an issue where there is broad bipartisan support. Increasing the focus on strengthening skills in basic reading, math, and English acquisition is an important first step for adults who need these skills. They are, after all, the gateway skills to a better job and a more secure future. Adults need more education than a GED or its equivalent, but that takes real commitment, time and effort. Our efforts to improve the Adult Education program should make it easier for adults to access quality programs. Thus, improving accountability provisions, improving professional development programs, insisting that research validated instructional practices are used, and conducting the research necessary to expand our knowledge of what works is essential as we move forward on reauthorizing this Act.

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There are major challenges ahead of us. For example, in 2001 ESL enrollment was 42 percent of the total enrollment in state-administered adult education programs, but there were continuing reports of waiting lists for classes in many parts of the nation. The U.S. Census Bureau data from 1999 show that full-time workers, 18 years and older, who have not completed high school earn an average of $23,447 per year. The average for all workers is $43,396. Those without a high school diploma or its equivalent on average earn almost half the salary of the average worker. Employers, searching for qualified employees over the past five years, have noticed an increasing trend in the numbers of employees lacking the basic skills needed in the workplace.

We must keep these facts in mind as we reauthorize the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Your testimony is vital to that task, and we look forward to hearing from each of you today.

I will now yield to Congressman Kildee for any opening statement he may have.

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APPENDIX B – WRITTEN OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MINORITY MEMBER DALE E. KILDEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETETIVENESS, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Statement of
The Honorable Dale E. Kildee
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness
Hearing on Adult Education
March 4, 2003

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to join you at today's hearing on the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. I especially want to welcome Assistant Secretary D'Amico to the Subcommittee today. I know that all the Members look forward to your testimony and the testimony of today's other witnesses.

Adult education is a key Federal investment in strengthening the literacy and employability of our nation. Very few adults in the United States are completely and truly illiterate. However, there are many, many adults without the literacy skills they need to find and keep decent jobs, support their children's education, and participate actively in life. According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, over 90 million people lack a sufficient foundation of basic skills to function successfully in our society. These individuals can't provide for their families and secure their economic future.

As we look to reauthorize the adult education program, I believe we need to focus on upgrading the quality of our programs. As the need for adult education continues, we must ensure that adult learners have the highest quality staff and benefit from the best research based curriculum. We also must ensure that both the Federal government and States provide increased funding to meet the needs of adult learners. Our States and localities can not be expected to provide top notch adult education programs on a shoe string budget.

In addition, we need to be continually sensitive to the needs in the adult education population. The fastest growing segment of adult education is English as a Second Language classes. As immigrants continue to come to our country and seek to become part of society and obtain employment, literacy in English is a critical goal.

Lastly, I look forward to hearing about the Administration's reauthorization priorities. I would be remise if I did not express my concerns about the Department's proposal to block grant vocational education and eliminate its secondary focus. However, the initial components of the Administration's proposals on Adult education seem promising, including its focus on standards for adult education programs. I look forward to working with the Administration and you Assistant Secretary D'Amico, as we focus on making our adult education programs more effective.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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APPENDIX C -- WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CAROL D'AMICO, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

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TESTIMONY OF DR. CAROL D'AMICO
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
SUBCOMMITTEE on 21st CENTURY COMPETITIVENESS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 4, 2003

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Kildee, and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify on basic and literacy education for the Nation's adults. The Department is preparing a proposal for the reauthorization of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). I look forward to working with the committee to craft legislation that will achieve our goals of strengthening program quality, improving accountability, and meeting the needs of low-literate and basic skills deficient adult Americans through partnerships with public and private organizations.

The Federal system of support for adult literacy programs has not been able to fully address the gap between the literacy skills needed to effectively function in the labor market and the current level of literacy possessed. Tens of millions of adults do not have the reading, language, computational, or English skills they need to be self-sufficient or to continue to adapt to the changing demands of the global information economy that characterize our Nation's present and future.

My office is approaching reauthorization from two directions. First, we have consulted widely with our constituents to develop a broad vision for how diverse institutions can come together to raise literacy levels and promote better real-life

outcomes. Second, we have sought to define the appropriate role of the Federal government in achieving that vision.

To meet the economic imperative of equipping our low literate and basic skills deficient workers for the demands of the workplace and in order to prepare residents with limited English proficiency for work and civic participation, Federal legislation must address the quality of the educational services paid for with taxpayers' money. The Federal government, as well as the States, must take a leadership stance in better focusing and coordinating complementary resources to more effectively enhance the literacy skills of Americans and provide better opportunities in the labor market.

The Economic Imperative

The Department of Education is embarking on a new national assessment of adult literacy to evaluate the skills of America's adults. The results will be available in late 2004. The findings of the last national survey were published in the early 1990s. That survey found 40 million American adults (aged 16 and older) functioning at the lowest level of literacy, and 90 million functioning at the two lowest levels. These individuals are not equipped with the skills they need to work effectively in the high-skill high-wage jobs that increasingly characterize our economy. Millions of working adults, along with unemployed, dislocated, and discouraged workers need to upgrade their basic skills to find and keep employment.

Are we prepared for the future? Today's job market demands that workers adapt as new technology is introduced, organizations restructure, and employment opportunities quickly appear and disappear. With the retirement of the baby boomers,

projections are that the Nation will have a shortage of perhaps 12 million qualified workers in the next decade. Even now, immigrants fill about one-half of the jobs created through labor market expansion. Many are highly qualified but, on average, foreign-born full-time workers have significantly lower English Language literacy skills than native-born full-time workers.

If the trends of the last decade continue, 80 percent of the jobs in the fastest growing employment sectors will require some postsecondary education or certification. Adults without a high school diploma or its equivalent will have no access to the education or occupational skills training necessary for those jobs. Adults who possess basic skills below the high school level will have a very tough road ahead of them in their quest to gain or maintain employment and self-sufficiency. Furthermore, an alarming 50 percent of new college students need to take remedial courses. Statistics leave no doubt that students in college remedial classes have a significantly reduced chance of finishing their degrees.

We need to create an educational pipeline that will better equip future workers. In the coming months, I look forward to discussing our proposal for secondary-technical education serving youth in high schools and colleges. Today, I will talk about the educationally disadvantaged adults in this pipeline – many of whom have already been left behind by our nation's K-12 education system and are looking for a second chance, and many of whom, as immigrants, are trying for the first time to take full advantage of America's opportunities. Of those participating in adult basic education programs, a

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growing proportion—now 42 percent—are in English literacy programs. The remaining 58 percent have basic skills below a high school-equivalent level.

To address their needs, adult basic and literacy education needs to be well-positioned to more effectively serve low-literate and limited English-speaking Americans and ensure that when they do enroll in basic education programs, their program is of sufficient quality that they can further their education and progress in the labor market.

The President's Principles for Education

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* will ensure that, over time, American students are better equipped to complete high school and have more options leading to long-term economic success. Long-term success, for many adults, includes entering a postsecondary degree or occupational certification program. But today, many adults are not prepared. Many left school before graduating or graduated lacking the basic skills we associate with even ninth-grade competency. The principles that the President set out in *No Child Left Behind* are basic principles for the Federal role in education, and they have guided our thinking about improving the educational outcomes for these low-literate and basic skills deficient adults.

The first principle of *No Child Left Behind* is *accountability for student performance*. The President is committed to closing the achievement gap at all levels of education. While the gap among demographic and income groups in elementary and secondary education achievement is well documented, we don't always think about the impact of that achievement gap on adults. There is a devastating gap between segments in the adult population. For example, those who succeeded in the traditional education

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system are significantly better off in the workplace. Consider the median annual income of full-time workers 25 years old and over in 1998. Men with a 9th-to-12th grade education, but no high school diploma, earned an average of $24,000, compared to an average of $40,300 earned by men with an associate degree or $56,500 earned by men with a bachelor's degree. For women, those with a 9th-to-12th grade education but no diploma earned an average of $16,500, compared to $29,900 earned by women with an associates degree and $36,600 earned by those with a four-year degree. The national assessment of adult literacy conducted in the early 1990s found that unemployment rates among labor force participants who scored at the lowest literacy level were four to seven times higher than those at the highest literacy level. Among the employed, the least literate workers were earning less than 40 percent of what the most literate workers earned. And the gap has most likely increased this past decade.

In addition to the individual and family costs of low literacy, there is an economic cost. We are at a critical juncture with the levels of basic skills attainment by many in our Nation and the needs of business to compete in the global marketplace. Our Nation's ability to keep and provide more jobs while increasing productivity will rely on our ability to produce the workers the employment market needs.

We must ensure that adult basic education programs help adults learn, and learn quickly. This is where the accountability system is critical. The accountability system must use the right measures. It must contain reliable and meaningful data. The right and meaningful measure is whether students are learning what they need for success in college, employment, or community participation.

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The second principle is to *focus on what works*. Very little empirical evidence is available to inform us about what works in adult basic and English literacy instruction. While researchers have made substantial progress in understanding what works in teaching children, we do not know as much about how to effectively teach adults reading, mathematics, or English. In the last three years, the Department has made significant new investments in order to start filling this research void, but the results are just beginning to become available and much more work must be done.

We can *reduce bureaucracy and increase flexibility* by positioning States to take a leadership role in developing a vision for adult education and a complementary vision for workforce preparation. One of the challenges in this area is to reduce the burden of data collection while improving the accountability system. Right now, adult education agencies are struggling to meet Federal data collection requirements. It is particularly difficult to find out about students' education and employment after they leave the adult basic education programs. Many States rely on student surveys to gather this information and have a hard time locating students. However, working in conjunction with the Department of Labor, we believe that we can develop more reliable data gathering techniques for more reliable outcome reporting. We must do what we can to simplify the accountability system and help States produce reliable and meaningful information on student outcomes, but we must not ask States for data that is unrealistic to collect.

The final principle is to provide options and choices for students. If there is a population that needs educational choices, it is out-of-school youth and disadvantaged adults. In many areas, the vast majority of the State's adult education grants go to one

education system—usually the secondary schools and sometimes the community colleges. So that potential students can choose from a variety of programs, legislation should support the participation of a broad array of agencies in the competition for adult basic education grants in each State and community.

Vision for Adult Basic and Literacy Education

I advocate expanding our vision by thinking creatively about the literacy education system. A system that includes business, community agencies, social service agencies, libraries, volunteer literacy providers, and any source that can help prepare students for employment and self-sufficiency through increased opportunities for postsecondary education or training. A quality adult education system would achieve the following:

- Adults will learn the core academic skills they need for current and future education, training or work opportunities.
- Adults will complete the high school-equivalent level of adult education possessing the basic reading, language, English-language, and computational skills they need to go to postsecondary education or training or employment without the need for remediation.
- Students will be able to find educational options close by that fit their schedules.
- Programs will be equipped to meet the special needs of students with disabilities.
- Students will improve their skills quickly when they participate.
- Adults will learn in a context that is appropriate to their individual needs.

The Federal role in achieving this vision is to provide funding and other supports to the States and local programs to carry out educational services and improve the effectiveness of those services. Federal funds pay for basic operations: teachers' salaries, instructional materials, technology, and professional development. Federal funds allow States to keep up with rising costs, improve quality, and serve more students. Federal funding to AEFLA and the corrections literacy programs increased $104 million, or 21 percent, between FY 2000 and FY 2002. Federal funding must be used more strategically and wisely and utilize existing service delivery mechanisms for greater efficiency.

The Federal legislation must build community capacity within and outside of the Federally funded system, establish Federal leadership for instructional quality through dissemination of best practices, and ensure accountability for student outcomes. For example, our office is launching a work-based literacy project to gather information about effective adult literacy/employer partnerships for strengthening the basic skills and employment skills of individuals. We will gather that information, and create useful materials that State and local adult literacy programs can use to build their internal capacity to more effectively partner with employers and increase availability of adult basic skills education.

The States' role is to ensure quality programs through the competitions they hold among possible providers, through statewide program improvement activities, and through the accountability system. The States reserve a portion of their Federal grants for this work. I believe that the State adult educational agencies also must step into a new

leadership role if we are to achieve the vision. Then the States can spearhead the building of community capacity and take a strong stance for local program accountability.

There are some things legislation can do to promote the vision. It can encourage high-quality instruction and instructor competency. It can focus on academic achievement and instructional practices that work and lead to more meaningful employment outcomes for participants. It can support States in holding local programs accountable for what students learn. In exchange for that accountability, it can give States and instructors the flexibility to do what works and reduce the administrative burden imposed by Federal laws and rules.

Achieving the Vision for Quality Instruction: Focus on Academics and What Works

The instructional component of adult basic and literacy education is essential. Programs need to *improve their quality,* both to accelerate student learning and to attract partners. Students need academic skills. Employers need to see documented results that they value, such as students' attainment of basic skills that will increase productivity. While the law should continue to authorize basic, secondary, family, workplace and English literacy activities, each of these programs needs to focus on student achievement of core academic skills that leads to better employment opportunities. This may include a transition from welfare-to-work, a new arrival into the nation's workforce, preparing for citizenship, retraining for dislocated and trade-affected workers, or family literacy.

One route to quality is *rigorous content standards and student assessments*. We propose that the new legislation provide Federal support and encouragement for the

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adoption of State content standards and standardized assessments in every State in language arts, mathematics, and English fluency. Just as accountability under *No Child Left Behind* is dependent on clear academic standards and assessing students' proficiency against those standards, so are standards and assessments needed to foster accountability in basic and literacy education. Many States already are working to this end. California has had standards for English literacy programs in place for several years. New York State adapted its K-12 standards for adult education and uses a peer-review process to check alignment of instructional materials with the standards.

It is time to institutionalize this practice to ensure that all adult basic, secondary, and English language students benefit from the increased rigor and consistency that comes from standards and assessments. For adults, standards should be calibrated against real-world expectations, such as entering postsecondary education or the workforce. Therefore, the standards should be developed in consultation with employers and postsecondary educators. The standards States establish under *No Child Left Behind* provide another benchmark against which States can calibrate their standards for adult students. We will support States in forming voluntary partnerships to develop standards and align student assessments to the standards, so that each State does not have to incur the expense of developing them.

Another mechanism for improving quality is *research-based practices.* The Administration is investing millions of dollars in new research on adult learning, and will continue to do so. My office uses the national activities funds from AEFLA to support this research. For example, we are supporting the National Institute of Child Health and

Development's rigorous research on the most effective methods for teaching reading skills to low-literate adults. Finding from our new research will help adult educators better understand what instructional strategies work. Without better scientifically based research on what instructional strategies work for adults, as well as what proficiencies are needed for initial and advancing employment, our efforts to support program improvement will have no grounding. We will identify promising practices that need to be scientifically tested, and test them. Over the next few years, as the findings from this research become available, we will support the translation of research into practical strategies for instructors and professional development to ensure research affects classroom practice.

To encourage and motivate adult educational programs to adopt promising practices, we propose that the legislation contain provisions to support research-based practice. For example, we can ask States to plan how they will adopt research-based practices and share them with instructors through professional development. The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) can play an important role in the support and dissemination of research on literacy. The Administration recommends reauthorization of NIFL with changes to ensure that national research on adult literacy is coordinated with what we are learning in reading research across the lifespan.

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Achieving the Vision for Accountability in Exchange for Increased Flexibility

We envision a system that holds programs accountable for real-world results that matter to students. For those either employed or seeking employment, acquiring a core academic foundation enables them to compete in the labor market and seek upward job mobility. For immigrants and others who are not fully literate in English, the result that matters is a level of English literacy that allows them to be successful at work and actively participate in the community and in their children's school. For those wishing to enter postsecondary education, the result that matters is entering college without remedial coursework and earning a degree. Our current accountability system does not do enough to inform students, the Department, or Congress about the degree to which adults in programs receiving Federal funds are meeting these objectives.

We know that in any endeavor, a system will "treasure what we measure." That is why choosing appropriate accountability measures and attaching value to those measures is extremely important. The accountability system established in AEFLA in 1998 was a breakthrough in the Federal-State relationship, in that it was a step toward accountability for student outcomes. We recommend that new legislation streamline and strengthen the accountability system to focus on what we really want from adult basic education—student learning, completion of education credentials and successful employment outcomes. These measures are consistent with a set of common measures the Administration has developed in order to assess various Federal programs serving youth and adults through education and training services, including adult basic and literacy education. The unique contribution of adult basic education to workforce development is to ensure that adults have a solid academic foundation to prepare them for the challenges

of the labor market. Thus, the adult basic education accountability system must maintain a focus on learning gains, education credentials, and workforce participation.

The legislation should promote accountability by continuing to offer incentives for success and much more explicit consequences for failure to perform, including both technical assistance and sanctions. States must be held accountable for taking action to improve local program results if the States are not meeting their goals.

Local program accountability for student achievement is a weak point in the highly decentralized system of adult education. Improved local accountability is the next step if performance information is to be used for program improvement. Accountability for results can create an incentive for programs to adopt the most effective research-based instructional practices. We will ask States to present a plan to increase the accountability of the agencies they fund. As in current law, States should annually assess the performance of grant recipients. But legislation must encourage States to be more proactive, providing technical assistance to grantees that are failing to deliver results. Ultimately, States should stop funding grantees that are not effectively serving the public. While States currently have the authority to do this, we believe the Federal legislation should strengthen States' authority over local performance.

Public commitment to results and public disclosure of results are a compelling part of accountability. Therefore, the legislation should require that the results of the accountability system be made easily available to students and potential students. We will ask Congress to create a report-card provision to enhance local program accountability.

Achieving the Vision for Building Capacity: More Access, Enrollment, and Choice

In our vision, the State adult education agency will provide leadership to establish consistent, high-quality services across many public and private settings, thereby increasing students' options and the number of adults enrolled. We will ask States to diversify providers at the local level. We will also ask States to build the capacity of community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, to provide these services.

To further improve the options for students, the legislation should support increased participation of employers and promote workplace literacy projects. The legislation should leverage the participation of for-profit educational institutions, which currently cannot compete for the AEFLA grants. We are exploring other means to encourage States to create options for students, including financial incentives for agencies that successfully diversify their local providers and increase the number of students enrolled.

There already is a large number of Federal funding streams that may, but often do not, support literacy education for specific groups of disadvantaged adults. Coordination between basic and postsecondary education can help basic education students make a smooth transition to college. Coordination with employment-related programs can help job-search and job-training clients succeed in new jobs. Coordination of English literacy programs with refugee and community services for immigrants can help limited-English speakers increase their employment opportunities and civic participation. Our legislation should encourage better coordination across these programs and limit bureaucratic

barriers. These connections help to ensure that individuals referred to literacy education from social and employment services, such as the One-Stop system, receive a high-quality education, equipping them to meet their goals.

To promote coordination across the public systems and connections between public and private literacy efforts, my office is planning to work with States to experiment with system-wide coordination. We will explore how a State can better plan for coordination, so that each agency identifies its expertise and contributes accordingly to a statewide effort. We will also explore how to spread quality across all Federally and non-Federally funded programs through content standards and assessments.

I believe technology holds great promise for improving basic and literacy instruction, improving adults' access to education and increasing the number of adults who are working to improve their skills. Adults need to significantly increase their skills in a reasonable amount of time so that they do not become discouraged. The legislation should support advancement of technology for adult learning. We propose to continue emphasizing the development of technology applications and a new approach to teaching through technology in the State and national leadership activities.

Part of improving customer choice is ensuring access to basic and literacy education opportunities through the one-stop career centers. For the reauthorization of WIA, the Departments of Education and Labor will propose to reduce the administrative burden and provide more flexibility in the establishment of State and local interagency relationships. Basic and literacy education will continue to be a partner in workforce investment. Together, the Departments are developing ideas for reauthorization that will

encourage referrals, joint services, and other strategies for coordination within the One-Stop system, while increasing State and local flexibility.

During this statement, I have mentioned several times the Department's investments in research and leadership projects. For future years, we propose to support national leadership activities through an allowable set-aside of the total appropriation for State grants, in contrast to the current practice of requesting a separate congressional appropriation for this purpose. A set aside would provide the Secretary flexibility to spend up to a certain percentage of funds for these national investments, and would also simplify the appropriations process.

Conclusion

The vision for the proposed Adult Basic and Literacy Education Act is that eligible adults have opportunities to improve their basic and literacy skills in high-quality research-based programs that will equip them to succeed in the next step of their education and employment. I look forward to working with the Committee to craft Federal policy that will successfully support the realization of this vision.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

APPENDIX D -- WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BETH B. BUEHLMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR WORKFORCE PREPARATION, U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

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STATEMENT OF BETH B. BUEHLMANN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR WORKFORCE PREPARATION
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21st CENTURY COMPETITIVENESS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

Improving Adult Education for the 21st Century
March 4, 2003

Chairman McKeon and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to have been invited to testify today on behalf of the United States Chamber of Commerce on the issue of improving adult education for the 21st century, and I commend the subcommittee for holding this hearing because as outlined in my testimony, finding qualified workers has consistently been identified as a priority and ongoing challenge for chamber members. The U.S. Chamber is the world's largest business federation, representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector and region. I am the executive director of the Center for Workforce Preparation (CWP), a nonprofit affiliate of the U.S. Chamber. In speaking on behalf of the Chamber and CWP, I bring to bear a perspective that comes from several years of working with state, local and metropolitan chambers, whose members are overwhelmingly small and mid-sized businesses where much of this nation's future job growth will occur. In addition, as my biography indicates, I also have served as the chief education and workforce staff to this committee from 1979 through 1991.

The Center for Workforce Preparation partners with chambers in their local communities so that they can help their business members secure the quality workforce they need to be competitive in a 21st century economy. When asked, chambers consistently say that workforce development is a high priority issue for the businesses in their communities. CWP helps them increase their capacity to become workforce leaders and connect with the already existing resources in their communities to help employers hire, train, retain and advance workers in a highly competitive marketplace.

I would like to cover four points in my remarks – a skilled workforce is an important issue for employers; a skilled workforce has bottom-line

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implications for business; provide an example of a company that has made lifelong learning a key element of its corporate culture; and finally discuss the role that local chambers play in helping employers find solutions to these workforce concerns.

Employers' Priority for Skilled Workers

Over the past several years, CWP has conducted three employer surveys. In all three surveys, employers confirmed that the issue they are most concerned about when it comes to remaining competitive is the skill levels of their workforce. Out of 1800 employers who participated in the April 2001 survey, 68 percent said that they had a significant problem in recruiting qualified employees and 78 percent said it was because applicants had the wrong skills, poor skills or no skills at all. In January 2002, data from a survey of over 1500 employers, confirmed similar results – 73 percent experienced very or somewhat severe conditions when trying to hire qualified workers, and 70 percent said that the workers had poor, wrong or no skills to meet businesses' needs.

The third CWP survey, conducted this January of 3700 employers from 80 communities across 34 states, found that just over 50 percent said it was "very hard or hard" to find workers with the skills that they need. One out of eight employers said that applicants needed assistance with training of basic skills – reading, writing, math and communications. What these results indicate is that even in a slow economy employers are having difficulty finding skilled workers.

In every industry sector, businesses large and small face many of the same challenges, including recruiting, training, retaining and advancing employees. Business quality, productivity and profitability depend on qualified workers who can perform on the job today and adapt to the new demands of tomorrow. Unfortunately, many American workers do not have the basic skills required to excel in modern workplaces. According to the Hudson Institute, 60 percent of all jobs in the 21st century will require skills that only 20 percent of the current workforce has.

Employers pay the price. People who are not "up to the job" mask their lack of skills, make costly errors and reduce efficiency. The workforce issues that plague employers – including high turnover, poor performance and low morale – may be symptomatic of a serious, underlying problem of workforce literacy.

Moreover, without employer intervention, the problem is likely to get worse. Workplaces are changing dramatically in response to an increasingly competitive business environment. To stay ahead, employers are reorganizing their workplaces to deliver their products and services better, faster and less expensively. They are collapsing the production process to allow teams of people to work together and take on greater responsibilities.

In these more flexible workplaces, even front-line employees perform work that used to be done by managers or specialists, including planning, budgeting, supervising, troubleshooting, and working directly with customers. Compared with more traditional workplaces, today's factories, offices, retail establishments and other workplaces have fewer managers and flatter hierarchies. They also require employees with higher and more varied skills. These realities are intensifying, not going away. With business success riding on workforce competence, workplace literacy is an urgent business issue that demands employers' attention.

In 2000, an American Management Association (AMA) survey of mid-sized and larger businesses found that 38 percent of job applicants taking employer-administered tests lacked the reading and math skills needed in the jobs for which they applied. This percentage was double the rate of 19 percent in 1996, just four years earlier. The AMA attributes this increase to the rapidly rising reading and math skill requirements in the workplace.

The skills deficit among American workers will continue to be a critical issue for business, regardless of the ups and downs in the U.S. economy. Workforce projections show that as older workers retire and the demographics shift, there simply will not be enough skilled workers to meet employer demands. This is a long-term problem that requires a long-range commitment to improve workforce skills.

The definition of literacy has changed over time and will continue to change. One hundred years ago, "literacy" was defined simply as the ability to write your name. In the new high-tech, highly competitive 21st century workplace, literacy means the ability to read, write, compute and solve problems, communicate, listen, and perform basic tasks. The National Institute for Literacy finds that almost 50 percent of American adults have low literacy skills making it difficult for them to do many of the tasks required to carry out work and family responsibilities.

Beyond the foundation skills of basic literacy – reading, writing and arithmetic – the meaning of workplace literacy has expanded as workplaces have changed. Technology has had a particularly profound impact on today's workplace skills requirements. New technologies, information, and competition will make today's state-of-the-art products and processes obsolete tomorrow. It has been estimated that jobs will be wholly restructured every seven years. Few working Americans will be able to remain competitive in their existing jobs without continually learning new skills.

Skills Impact the Bottom-line

Three challenges face employers, policymakers and individuals in this new environment. First, as more immigrants enter the workforce speaking multiple languages, employers will continue to face the issue of communication barriers. Second, while it is generally acknowledged that most jobs require some postsecondary education, increasing numbers of young adults who are entering the workforce lack high school credentials. Third, employed workers do not have the advanced literacy skills necessary to remain competitive and productive in today's workplace.

CWP surveys confirm that employers, especially small and mid-sized, recognize that a well-trained, well-educated workforce is critical to success. Faced with continuing workforce shortages, however, companies are pressed to hire people whose skills do not match the job skills required. There are compelling business reasons for companies, state and local chambers of commerce, and educators to work together to improve workforce skills.

Employers overwhelmingly report increased profits and other bottom-line benefits when their employees gain the basic skills that enable them to work more effectively, according to a 1999 report by The Conference Board, *Turning Skills Into Profit: Economic Benefits of Workplace Education Programs.* Workplace education programs that increase basic skills, such as reading and mathematics, foster positive attitudes among employees.

Improving workforce skills creates people who work smarter and better, with increased productivity and profitability for their companies. This means that employees, working with the same resources, materials and equipment, are able to work faster and more efficiently. It also means that they can perform tasks with less effort or, conversely, do a better job with the same effort.

With workplace training, employees get along better with colleagues and managers, and cope with change in the workplace more effectively. In addition, they become more willing and able to learn job-specific skills and take greater responsibility for producing quality work and problem solving. The direct economic benefits of workplace education programs – including productivity, profitability, reduced time on task, reduced error rates, improved health and safety records, reduced waste, and increased customer and employee retention – are important and measurable results. The indirect economic benefits – such as improved quality of work, better team performance, more positive attitudes and increased flexibility – are less tangible and more difficult to measure. Still, employers recognize that these intangibles contribute enormously to organizational performance.

Despite the substantial and increasing need for improving workplace literacy – and the bottom-line business benefits of training workers – there are relatively few workplace education programs. The reason may be that employers simply don't know where to begin, and do not know what resources are available in their communities to help them. Small and mid-sized employers find themselves without the staff that would enable them to take advantage of these resources, and often do not want to become entangled in publicly funded programs because of government reporting and paperwork requirements.

Quaker Fabric Corporation: One Company's Solution

I would like to share with you one example of an employer who has for years taken an active interest in promoting the literacy of his workforce. Larry Leibenow, the chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors and CEO of Quaker Fabric Corporation, established an in-house learning center where Quaker employees can learn basic reading and math skills; and earn their high school equivalency certificates. They can learn supervisory, problem-solving, critical thinking and computer skills, and how to operate new machines, all without ever having to leave their place of work. The Learning Center has allowed Quaker Fabric Corporation to hire and retain good employees, and it has also allowed employees to meet their career development expectations.

Quaker's Learning Center also helps the company further its corporate culture objectives. The center's course list includes programs specifically intended to encourage full participation in the company by individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultural heritages. This explains why many of the

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classes taught at the center are conducted in more than one language, and why English and foreign language training in general is a high priority. Mr. Liebenow is committed to creating a culture of lifelong learning through the center because students for life make for a more skilled workforce, a stronger company, and a better community.

On February 26, 2003, the Mayor of Fall River, community agencies such as the Fall River School Department and the YMCA, and Quaker Fabric Corporation came together to announce a major push to improve reading skills for both parents and children through an Even Start grant. As part of this announcement, the Mayor said that a changing economy means that the average worker needs more education than workers of the last generation. He added that Quaker Fabric has been a leader and role model on this issue for the public sector, and has conducted English as a second language classes for its workers for years.

The Role Chambers Play

All too often programs such as the one at Quaker Fabric are dependent on the person in the leadership position to make them happen. The Center for Workforce Preparation believes that for small and mid-sized businesses, chambers can serve in that leadership capacity and bring together the right public-private community partners to address the workforce challenge of too few skilled workers. CWP works with chambers to provide them the resources, materials and information they need to become workforce development leaders.

For example, in April 2002, CWP released *A Chamber Guide to Workplace Literacy: Higher Skills – Bottom Line Results.* The information contained in this toolkit makes a strong case for businesses and other community stakeholders to become advocates for workplace education programs and community initiatives to assist adult learners in gaining the basic skills they need to become productive workers. It also identifies the community resources available and heightens awareness of the negative impact of illiteracy in the workplace. The toolkit provides fact sheets, a PowerPoint presentation, examples of successful programs, and potential resources to support employers. Chambers can use these resources with their business members to mobilize community literacy efforts.

Our literacy toolkit is but one illustration of the work CWP does with its partners, such as the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, The Ford and

Annie E. Casey Foundations, Verizon, Virginia Commonwealth University and the National Institute for Literacy. CWP's work is distinctive in that its information is presented from the employer point of view, not from the perspective of the program participant. Employers are interested in programs that provide business services, understand the business culture, respond to business needs, serve employers as customers, add value, and help to create a pipeline for skilled workers. If the public workforce system helps small and mid-sized businesses hire smarter, reduce turnover costs and train for the skills they need, they will have greater confidence in working with and using its services.

CWP is working to build those relationships, to help employers understand how to access the services already available in their communities, and to create the links with work support services that can help employers retain and advance entry-level workers. In addition, CWP partners with state, local and metropolitan chambers to identify underutilized populations, such as individuals with disabilities, as sources of qualified skilled workers for the employers in their communities.

The role chambers play in communities is vital to creating this necessary link between employer needs and the publicly funded workforce system. The more robust these relationships are, the more likely that key community partners will be interested in working together to create an effective workforce system. The focus is on dual customers – employers and participants – not dual systems. It is CWP's mission to help chambers build workforce development partnerships so that employers and communities benefit.

Implications for the Future

In closing, let me emphasize that workforce development, especially as it relates to the skills of the workforce, is critically important to the competitiveness of our economy. Small and mid-sized employers define the lack of skills as the key issue they face in hiring and retaining workers. Because this is such a pervasive concern, it is a core issue that needs to be resolved. There is a role that government can play in providing greater awareness of and access to programs to improve literacy and build basic skills for all workers and employers. These essential skills should be part of the core services offered through one-stop career centers and related workforce development programs and providers, and should not be available only as part of intensive services once a person has failed to secure work or retain a job. Workforce Investment Boards should assure availability of essential adult basic education and literacy

skills training as part of the criteria used when certifying one-stop service centers.

Adult basic education is a mandated partner in the one-stop career system. The intent was to create greater connections to programs preparing people for the workplace. Literacy and basic skills training are foundation skills for workforce development and as such should include measurable outcomes that lead to meaningful, successful employment. These outcomes need to be more directly linked to the skills needed in the 21st century workplace. For example, *Equip for the Future*, a National Institute for Literacy initiative, is working with states and adult literacy programs to develop a work-readiness credential that defines, measures, and certifies mastery of the knowledge and skills required in the workplace. Such initiatives should be encouraged in collaboration with workforce investment boards to develop measurable outcomes related to workforce participation.

I thank the Chairman and this subcommittee for this opportunity and welcome questions at the appropriate time.

APPENDIX E – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANN-MARIE C. PANELLA, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, MCS INDUSTRIES, INC., EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA.

Improving Adult Education for the 21st Century

By Ann-Marie C. Panella

Adult Literacy Education impacts the United States in more ways than just the ability to read and write. It impacts economic development, family stability, crime statistics, and overall quality of life. Our community in Easton, Pennsylvania is a microcosm of what is happening in many communities across the U.S. and MCS Industries is a microcosm of Easton. MCS Industries was primarily an on-site manufacturer of picture frames. Our concentration is moving from production to distribution. Fifteen years ago, our employees were unskilled and semi-skilled laborers. Today, distribution employees must read, write English, do basic mathematics, and learn computers. We, as one of the larger employers in Easton, have a responsibility to bring our employees up to that level, rather than disregard their other abilities (such as a strong work ethic).

Some facts:

- 19% of adults in Pennsylvania perform at the lowest literacy level (equated to a 5th grade reading and skill level) (USDE, National Adult Literacy Survey, 1993)
  - When I began working at MCS Industries, most memos to all employees were written at a 6th grade reading level, for newer employees to understand, I now write at a 4th grade level.
- 28.6% of Easton adults over the age of 18 have less than a high school education.
- 10% of adults have less than an 8th grade education.
  - Of the last 25 employees hired, 5 (20%) are high school dropouts, 11 (44%) are foreign born with varying education, and 3 (12%) have GED's.
- 11% of Northampton County residents do not speak English at home. (2000 Census).
- The Latino population in Easton grew 122% from 1990 to 2000.
- Adults at the lowest literacy levels earned a median income of $240 per week, compared to $681 for those at the highest levels.
  - Our starting salary for an unskilled laborer in production is $290 per week, a computer literate worker in distribution starts at $340 per week.
- Children of parents who are unemployed and have not completed high school are 5 times more likely to drop out than children of employed parents.

When I started my employment with MCS Industries, Inc. in 1993, most of the factory workers could be defined as the "Working Poor". There was a high percentage of single parent households. Unfortunately, many of the employees had left school because of family responsibilities. I realized a need to make it "easier" for them to receive an education. For the dropouts, we would need a GED course, for the foreign born - an English as a Second Language course, and for those, who weren't strong enough scholastically for GED, Adult Based Equivalency.

The first issue (after Management Approval) was convincing the employees that this was not an embarrassment, but an opportunity. It's difficult admitting to strangers that one cannot read. The ESL students were resistant to admitting (in some cases) that they

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were illiterate in two languages. And the horror of all was the administering of placement tests.
The Adult Literacy Department of the local community college (Northampton Community College) was elated to hear an employer wanted to run classes on site.
We decided to have 2 two-hour sessions for each class per week. MCS would pay the employees for the first hour of class (during work time); the second hour would be on the students' time. Money was not the issue – commitment was the deciding factor. Making a sacrifice gives people more pride in their accomplishments.

The First Class (12 weeks)
There were eight students in the GED class. Six passed their GED examinations and received their diplomas (if they passed, we paid the $35 for the exam).

> "MCS's GED program helped make it possible to achieve an important goal in my life. The availability of having these classes at the workplace made it convenient and very accessible. Without MCS's support I would probably not have gotten my GED as soon, or as easily as I did."
>
> Brian Heil, Supervisor Poster Department

Twelve employees were accepted into the ESL program. They were chosen from 37 applicants. The most significant factor was seniority in the company. Most of the original twelve have stayed with the company but advanced from production jobs into more advanced positions.

> "Since 1994 I started to work at MCS Industries in the Posters Department. I worked in this department a couple of years, and they gave me the opportunity to work in the Packing Department like a Lead Person. I had the opportunity to take English classes by the program MCS offered to their employees. Thanks to that program I am doing a better job and been promoted to the Inventory Department. Thanks to MCS Industries for trusting me and I hope to help you in everything I can"
>
> Carmen Gonzalez, In the U.S. since 1994 from Puerto Rico. Spoke minimal English.

The twelve students for Adult Basic Equivalency were much more difficult to narrow. We had employees with 2nd to 4th grade reading levels, who had dropped out of school at age 15. We had single mothers, who because of their pregnancies had left school early and now were the parents with children they did not want to see following in their footsteps. Only one of this group has received a GED. However, all brought their reading levels to at least 6th grade.

Since our first year was so successful, Northampton Community College was able to get us State grants the following year. By the third year, we were back to financing for ourselves, using retired teachers found for us by Easton's ProJeCt for People, a non-profit organization with the motto "Helping People Help Themselves". The financing was

supplemented by vending machines! The soda, snack and food machines give rebates. That is money that came from the employees – what better way to return it than through education. (Since we now get annual grants from Pennsylvania WIN and WedNet PA, the vending money is used as scholarships for employees, their children, or grandchildren to attend college. Education is the ONLY way to break the cycle of poverty!)

Where Do We Go From Here?

During the Industrial Revolution, the United States moved to the forefront of the world through invention and entrepreneurial ideas. We have continued this domination but it is now time for another Industrial Revolution. With the onset of technology, we must bring our workforce forward. Only through literacy can we make this happen.

As an employer, MCS has realized that training is not the "icing on the cake"; rather it is the eggs and milk. We have an obligation to our employees to bring them forward. This can be attained via partnerships with local educators, both non-profit and private. Each community college in the US should have a program similar to the one at Northampton Community College (NCC). NCC offers free Adult Literacy & Basic Workforce Development Programs in Northampton, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne Counties.

NCC's Adult Literacy Department provided these services during program year 2001-2002:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE) – 1309 learners or 37.4% of the total number served;
- GED – 557 learners served or 15.9% of the total numbered served;
- English as a Second Language (ESL) – 1635 learners or 46.7% of the total served. * (Of this group, ½ or 819 learners were low level; a native speaker could not communicate effectively with them at this level.)

Many of the tutors are retired educators and other professionals. That is a resource, we must use. As we "Baby Boomers" mature, we need to realize that it is time to give back to the community.

We need to address the convenience of this education. You have seen how having it during work enabled employees to attend. Even those, whose companies refuse to enlist, should have the time not be seen as a hardship. Two possibilities – have the classes at varying times during the day & evening, and/ or have childcare as a supplement.

By addressing the educational needs of the workforce, we can move away from manual production and bring more employees into the automated, computer age. Many of our products are now imports, but they must be distributed. This is computerized using scanners. Even the manufacturing we still perform here gains from education. Quality standards can be stressed to a literate group of employees. What is a picture frame – just 4 corners of wood attached, but if the corners don't angle correctly, the workmanship suffers.

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The Quality Department is always writing standards that everyone must read. The packagers need not always demand a calculator for determining quantity. (Thanks to the nuns in Brooklyn, NY I can still do multiplication tables in my head).

We must stop seeing those lacking reading skills, whether foreign born or a failure of our education system, as being a burden to society. They are a resource we must develop. We need some funding from the government to get it started. Employers can only see the results after the program has completed the first phase. But they need the initiative to start. As we are all aware money talks. Profit comes from a more efficient workforce. That same efficiency is a direct correlation with the ability to understand the project. Whether ESL or ABE, this education is the foundation for bringing the workforce into the 21st Century.

I don't mean to tell this committee how to do your jobs. Rewarding employers through tax credits for the time they are paying the employee to attend school might help. Rewarding schools that cut their dropout rates or offer alternatives for those who must leave for family reasons is a possibility. Granting more money to the programs already in existence will help (ProJeCt has lost 20% of their funding this year for Adult Literacy!)
If you need more proof:

When Rosario Acevado (who emigrated here from Peru) finished her second year of English as a Second Language, she asked to say a few words.

> "Do you know how wonderful it is to help my son with his homework? He's in third grade now and for the first time I can sit and read to him. Thank you."

Kathleen Gibson started working for MCS in 1987 to help get herself and her children off welfare. She was a 10th grade dropout. Three years ago while attending our ABE classes her grandson started talking about dropping out. When she stressed to him that an "old lady" like her could go back to school, it managed to keep him in.

I'm doing this in my little corner of the United States. Please join me in spreading the word that **We as a Nation Value Literacy**.

APPENDIX F – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF RANDY WHITFIELD, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AND STUDENT SERVICES, BASIC SKILLS DEPARTMENT, NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM.

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Testimony of
Dr. Randy Whitfield
before the
Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness
Washington, D. C.
March 4, 2003

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to talk about Adult Education. As Chairperson of the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education, I have submitted a document to you which is entitled "Bottom Lines: Principles for Re-Authorization of Title II of the Workforce Investment Act. Today I would like highlight a few issues discussed in that document.

Many state directors, including me, not only administer the programs, but also once taught in them; therefore, we know what improvements are needed. After teaching developmental studies for over fifteen years to community college freshmen, I taught an adult education class to sixteen mechanics in a local plant, six of whom were beginning readers. With degrees in teaching reading and English, I had knowledge of the scope and sequence of skills these students needed and I know that adults are "learners in a hurry," wanting to apply tomorrow what they learned today. With a collection of menus from local restaurants, memos and signs from the plant, and textbooks with practice exercises, I began helping these students improve their basic skills. The day I decided to switch to adult education full-time was the day that one of these students bragged to the entire class that he got a letter from the company and could read every word. The entire class stood up and cheered. He then said the letter was notifying him that he would be laid off for a whole month, but, with tears in his eyes, he proudly said, "I could read it."

I hope that my being here today will help the many students we serve across the United States and in the Outlying Areas. For program year 2001 our programs enrolled 2,700,000 out-of-school youth and adults, but there are over 94 million adults who need our services. I recently participated in one of the Department of Education's "visioning" meetings for reauthorization. One participant said she was going to criticize us after seeing the number served compared to the number needing services until she saw our low funding levels. She then praised us for doing so much with so little. We ask that our funding be increased over a period of time so that we can improve program quality, become more accountable, and serve more students.

Many of our programs have waiting lists because resources are not available to meet all the needs, particularly with the immigrant population. Forty-two percent of our students nationwide during the last program year were English as a Second Language (ESL) students, an increase from thirty-eight percent the previous year. In North Carolina, companies call our colleges frequently, begging for workplace programs for their immigrant employees. We appreciate the additional funding through English Literacy/Civics Education grants, but would prefer for the money to be incorporated into our funding formula, not given as a set-aside which makes it more time-consuming to manage.

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Our programs not only do so much with so little funding; we also do so many different things for so many different people, something we think needs to be continued. Adult education programs serve the needs of many people – from those who cannot read, to those who need a few classes to complete an Adult High School diploma or GED, to mothers who want to improve skills so they can help their children with homework, to incarcerated people nearing their time to re-enter society, to immigrants wanting to learn to speak English.

There has been some movement toward making our programs workforce development only. Although many states do have extensive workplace education programs, we are so much more than that. I once intervened between an instructor in a workplace class and an auditor who was questioning the fact that one of the students, a retired grandmother, was learning to read by using children's books which she planned to read to her grandson. The auditor said that had nothing to do with workforce education. I said she was preparing the workforce of the future! When you teach an adult, according to reading expert Dr. Tom Stitch, you get "double duty dollars" because your money helps the parent learn who, in turn, helps the child learn. If you leave no adult behind, you will definitely leave no child behind.

Besides supporting the broad purposes of our programs, state directors also strongly support accountability. We not only worked closely with the Department of Education to help develop accountability measures, but we also have worked with them to strengthen these measures. Our main concerns regarding accountability are about the comparability of data among states.

States have been asked to implement a new accountability system, expand use of technology, make use of new teaching strategies that are grounded in scientific research, and collect and report post-program effects. There is even discussion around the development of curriculum standards for each state. State directors want to be accountable and want to institute these improvements, yet these changes require intensive training. In the current law our state leadership funds that provide professional development were reduced from 15 percent to 12.5 percent. Only fourteen percent of teachers in our programs nationwide are full-time, making turnover a problem and training even more imperative.

Besides increasing training capacity, another way to strengthen accountability is a continued emphasis on National Programs funding for the U. S. Department of Education. We cannot address all the issues surrounding accountability and program quality without the help of the federal government which plays a powerful role in supporting research, demonstration, professional development, and information dissemination activities. We ask that you continue to support funding for National Programs, but we would like that funding separated from state grants.

These are just some ideas we have for reauthorization. The rest, as I indicated earlier, are in our "Bottom Lines" document. Thank you again for the opportunity to be here today. We appreciate your interest in our programs.

APPENDIX G – WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HERMELINDA MORALES, ADULT EDUCATION PARTICIPANT, AURORA, COLORADO.

Testimony of Hermelinda Morales
ESL Adult Learner, Jamaica School Family Literacy Program

U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness

"Improving Adult Education for the 21st Century"

March 4, 2003

Good afternoon. Chairman McKeon, Representative Kildee and distinguished members of the committee, I thank you for inviting me to testify on "Improving Adult Education for the 21st Century."

My name is Hermelinda Morales and I'm here to tell you how the family literacy, adult education program has helped my family improve our situation. The fact that I can sit before you to take part in this occasion, proves that without family literacy programs, I would still be faced with a future that didn't look bright.

I am from Mexico, but I have lived in the United States for seven years. I came to the United States in search of the opportunities that this great country is known for. However, I didn't speak any English and this limited my opportunities to parking cars and cleaning hotel rooms. I knew that in order for me to move forward in the workplace and provide a good life for my family that I would need to learn English. My desire to increase my skills and therefore my chances for success in the workplace was only part of my motivation. I also wanted to be able to help my children to succeed in school. I wanted to be a good role model. I was lucky; I found the Jamaica Elementary School family literacy program. This program receives money that you all here in Congress provide, along with additional money from the National Center for Family Literacy's Toyota Families in Schools grant.

I have attended this program for three years. In this program, I have learned to read, write, and speak English. As I stated earlier, before I started this program, I didn't speak any English and my opportunities were limited. However, as I learned English, I was able to find better work and I now work for a company where I always communicate in English.

This family literacy, adult education program has helped me very much to become independent. I am able to go to the doctor without an interpreter, conference with my children's teachers, and fill out necessary forms. An example is when I applied for my citizenship. This helped me to understand and pass what I was reading and hearing during the interview. Now, I am proud to say that I've accomplished my first goal. I am a U.S. Citizen.

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This family literacy program has positively impacted my entire family. It has helped me to understand my children's homework and to read messages from the children's teachers. I am now a much more involved parent in my children's education.

In the family literacy program, I am learning many ways to help my children with reading, writing, and math. Because my adult education program is also part of the family literacy program, I learn what my children are learning in their classrooms. My son feels happy because I'm there with him. Parent Time is very important because the teachers make time to come in and show us how to help our children with reading and writing. Family literacy is very important because when I came to the United States I couldn't communicate with other people in English. Now I am an active member of my community.

I have set two goals and accomplished one of them so far. The first goal was to learn English to get my citizenship. Now that I have completed that, my second goal is to study hard and get my GED to get a better job that pays more money to provide for my family.

In addition, there is no excuse from my not attending classes due to not having a baby-sitter. The family literacy program provides free daycare for children who are not yet in school. I am very grateful to the volunteers who give their time to us. The program could be even more successful to myself as well as the other parents if we could go more days with longer hours. Night and weekend hours would be wonderful to those of us who work during the day.

In closing, without a doubt, I would not be as far as I am today without our Family Literacy Program. Again, they taught me to speak and read English, to have better self-confidence, to move forward to get my GED and most importantly, being able to understand and help my children with their growing education. I know that Congress wants to be certain programs work and spend money only when there are good results. What family literacy and adult education have done for me is real. It works. Thanks to you.

I encourage Congress to make family literacy an important part of adult education in the 21st century. Thank you.

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